

The HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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The HISTORICAL BULLETIN

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THE COMPLETE TOYNBEE: A MODEST APPRAISAL

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The last four volumes of Arnold J. Toynbee's *A Study of History* were published in October, 1954, and in the intervening eighteen months they have been submitted to the examination and appraisal of many capable critics. The reaction of these critics will some day constitute an interesting page in the book of Western historiography, for they agree but little among themselves in their praise and blame of Mr. Toynbee. On one thing they are agreed: Toynbee's ten-volume *Study* is a massive and impressive work. The publisher claims that it contains over three million words on 6,290 pages; it has about 19,000 footnotes; and the indexes total 332 pages with about 19,000 main entries. This is indeed a tremendous work for one man to accomplish, the most impressive work of our generation, and one which will take an important place in the history of English letters.

On this the critics agree. But they agree on little else. Mr. Toynbee has been accused of writing bad history, of not writing history at all, of seeking refuge in "religious mysticism," of trying to be a prophet, of writing theological poetry in prose, of imposing ill-conceived laws on the past, of being a positivist, a pseudo-scientist, a determinist, a poet relying on intuition—and of being and doing many other things. Obviously, even in ten volumes, Mr. Toynbee cannot be and do all these things; it is equally obvious that some of the criticisms negate others. But there is a significance in the fact that intelligent men—at least some of whom have read the ten volumes they criticize—can form such disparate estimates of Toynbee's intent and purpose, of his methodology, and of his success in accomplishing what he set out to do.

A Study of History is an important work. The first six volumes have already made an impact on historical thinking; certain "laws" educed in these volumes are now common coin among literate, thinking men, such as the "law" of challenge-and-response, and that of withdrawal-and-return. Whether one accepts them or not, he must understand what they mean. The last four volumes will have a similar importance, for in them Toynbee studies universal states and universal religions, as well as the contacts between civilizations and the prospects of the West. But the lasting importance of *A Study of History*, we

believe, will lie in the impact it makes as a whole. For beneath the long excursions (sometimes of several hundred pages) into the curiosities of history, lies a plan and a scheme of development to which the author remains faithful from beginning to end. Examination of the complete Toynbee, in the light of his critics therefore seems in order at this time.

THE RECEPTION OF TOYNBEE'S *Study*

A great deal of confusion is saved if we remember at the outset that Toynbee is not trying to write history. He is writing *about* history—and this is a very different thing. Since Toynbee's answer to two of his critics in the *Journal of the History of Ideas* last year, there can be no doubt about this point, made in the *Historical Bulletin* in 1948.¹ Pieter Geyl, one of Toynbee's harshest and most consistent critics,² and Edward Fieser reviewed the last four volumes under the respective titles of "Toynbee the Prophet" and "Toynbee as Poet."³ In a brief answer to these critics, Toynbee explained: "I am trying to use the knowledge of history as a telescope-lens for taking a look at the universe as a whole."⁴ He explained that a book about Shakespeare is not to be judged as a book by Shakespeare, and similarly "when one is studying history, one is examining history, not narrating it."

A Study of History is an inquiry into history with the purpose of throwing additional light on the meaning of man's existence and giving a fuller explanation of the purpose of his earthly sojourn with its trials and its fleeting pleasures. Put in another way, this is a "philosophy of history"⁵ that seeks to justify the ways of God to man. Since the development of modern critical history in the nineteenth century, practitioners of the craft have generally looked on "philosophies of history" with suspicion and hostility. Historians feel that such works attempt too much, are not subject to scientific verification, are highly subjective, and push historical data around to suit the investigator's purpose.

¹ Thomas P. Neill, "Toynbee's Philosophy of History," *The Historical Bulletin* (January, 1948), a review of D. C. Somervell's one-volume abridgement of the first six volumes, reprinted in *The Catholic Mind* (August, 1948).

² See Phyllis O'Callaghan, "Arnold J. Toynbee: A Selective Bibliography on *A Study of History*," on pp. of this issue.

³ *Journal of the History of Ideas* (April, 1955).

⁴ *Ibid.* (June, 1955), p. 421.

⁵ We use this phrase loosely, as it is commonly used to refer to theories of history that might more properly be designated "theology of history" or "sociology of history," depending on the sort of "law" they seek to discover and the framework of interpretation they adopt.

Toynbee therefore had to launch his venture in the face of a traditional hostility on the part of historians. The professional journals did not bother reviewing his first three volumes when they appeared in 1934, nor was much attention paid to the next three when they were published in 1939. Somervell's condensation in 1947 appeared at a time, after the Second World War and two atom bombs, when literate people were ready to read anything that seemed to reveal the meaning of history and shed light on our future prospects. Everyone was talking about Toynbee, who was a professional historian and who had written *A Study of History*, so historians could not very well ignore him any longer. But by reason of their training they were predisposed to give Toynbee's ambitious *Study* hostile treatment.

Philosophers in the Christian tradition were ready to be tolerant of such a *Study*, but their tradition was long set against taking such a work seriously. It might be good reading, but it can hardly be a field of philosophy. Jaques Maritain expressed the traditional feeling toward any proposed "philosophy of history" in these words:

The Angels who see all the happenings of the universe in the creative ideas, know the philosophy of history; philosophers cannot know it. . . . And as to detecting the causes and supreme laws working through the stream of incident, to do that we should need to share the counsel of the supreme Fashioner, or be directly enlightened by Him. That is why it is properly a prophetic work to deliver to men the philosophy of their history.⁶

Historical events and the demands of men forced at least some philosophers to investigate again whether a philosophy of history is possible and—if it is—whether it is deserving of the time and effort one would have to give to it. At the risk of oversimplifying the difficulties involved in the problem, let us state the attitude of philosophers in the Christian tradition toward a philosophy of history when Toynbee's final volumes appeared in 1954: 1) the fact that we do not know all the happenings of the universe, past and future, does not preclude formulating a philosophy of history; 2) an adequate philosophy of history demands a certain knowledge of the end of history as well as the past, for without such knowledge it is impossible to arrive at any ultimate concepts about the meaning of history; 3) revelation is an historical fact, and in revelation man has

Three Reformers (New York, 1937), p. 93.

learned a number of truths about the future; 4) a theology of history therefore seems a more proper and more feasible study than a philosophy of history; 5) history is concerned with free actions, and is therefore full of contingencies; 6) but these are not mutually exclusive subjects, and there is no essential reason why philosophers in the Christian tradition cannot follow their traditional practice of using the data of revelation to think philosophically about history.⁷ Put even more briefly, the *post-Christum* philosopher can inquire philosophically into the meaning of history if he includes the data of revelation in his inquiry. It is an arduous and a delicate task, and whether it is deserving of cultivation as a field of philosophy remains an open question with most philosophers today.

A third group of scholars were prepared to receive Toynbee's *Study* more favorably than historians or philosophers—if his methodology and his assumptions conformed to their standards. These were the sociologists. From the time of its birth as an independent subject, sociology has been concerned with "patterns of human behavior," the comparative study of civilizations, and similar areas of investigation that are component parts of what is generally understood today as a "philosophy of history." Sociologists were therefore prepared to consider Toynbee's massive *Study* seriously and to accept or reject it accordingly as it conformed to their methodology and assumptions.

In this setting Toynbee's *Study of History* made its appearance in three installments (an important point to keep in mind) the first three volumes in 1934, the next three in 1939, and the final four in 1954. A final evaluation of the work must take into consideration its place in the genre to which it belongs, for Toynbee's *Study* is the latest in a notable series of similar studies that trace their ancestry back to St. Augustine's *City of God* and run through Orosius' *Seven Books Against the Pagans*, Otto of Freising's *The Two Cities*, down to Bossuet's *Discourse on Universal History*. Its more immediate predecessors are Vico's *New Science*, Turgot's, Condorcet's, and Comte's theories of Progress, Herder's *Philosophy of History*, and more immediately yet, Hegel's *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. And it follows closely in the wake of Marx's dialectical materialism, found

⁷ A good essay on this subject is Josef Pieper, *The End of Time* (New York 1954). Both the strong and weak points of Pieper's argument are well analyzed in a review of *The End of Time* by Peter W. Nash, S.J., in *The Modern Schoolman* (January, 1956).

in his various writings, and Oswald Spengler's deterministic *Decline of the West*.

When Toynbee planned his *Study*, Marx and Spengler were in command of the field, except in certain restricted circles in which the Christian theory of history still prevailed. It is chiefly against Marx and Spengler, then, that Toynbee planned and wrote his *Study*, but like Marx and Spengler he is heir to the tradition created by Augustine, Bosquet, Voltaire, Vico, Hegel and others, and he cannot entirely escape their influence. There are passages in his *Study* that are almost perfect duplications of passages in Vico, or Turgot, or Comte—which is not a surprising thing in that all are examining the same subject for substantially the same purpose, and all are in the same general tradition. Most important, however, Toynbee tries to do what the others attempted: from historical data to justify the ways of God to man; from the evidence of history to work out empirically a philosophy of history that will give men satisfactory answers to the ultimate questions of whence?, why?, whither?. He is interested in the historian's proper question of how? only insofar as it brings him closer to answering the three basic questions. A just appraisal of Toynbee's *Study* therefore requires for its setting a brief survey of the great standard philosophies of history in Western thought before his own.

CHRISTIAN THEORY OF HISTORY—IT'S SECULARIZATION

To the Ancients history was a meaningless repetition of temporal events. Birth, youth, maturity, decline, and death were the lot of all living things and all human institutions. The universe also moved in eternal cycles of endless repetitions. From the observation of nature and of man in ancient times, then, came the classical theory that history moves in endless and meaningless cycles. One cannot speak of a beginning or an end of history, nor of a final purpose or ultimate meaning. Such a view of history gave a decisive role to Fate, before which man is helpless, and it wrote of human endeavor as ultimately futile.

The cyclical view of history could not very well be held by anyone who accepted the Incarnation and Redemption as historical facts, for God's personal intervention in the continuum of time was a unique event that could never be repeated. Jewish and Christian teaching implied a straight-line or progressive view of history instead of the classical cycle. History came with the Christians to have a beginning, a progress, and an end, a purpose and an ultimate meaning revealed by God to man. The

beginning is God's creative act; the end is mankind's union with Him at the end of time. History leads from the Fall to the Redemption, the central point of all history, and after the Redemption to the Kingdom of God.

This is the historico-theological framework within which Christian philosophies of history have been formulated. The first such formulation to take on classical proportions was Augustine's *City of God*, an apologetic work in which the Bishop of Hippo seeks to refute the pagan charges that Christianity was to blame for Rome's decline. In the course of refuting these charges Augustine rejects the cyclical view of history explicitly and propounds his own formulation of the Christian view. He considers the cyclical view abhorrent because it destroys the meaning of life and of history. He then tells of the beginning of history in God's creative act, the unique event of the Redemption, and the end of history, which is the Kingdom of God.

God is given a sovereign place as creator and providential master of all things, including time and history. God remains distinct from history; he is the Lord of History, and He controls it. From history we can discern some fragments of truth which God has seen fit to manifest to us. Augustine handles the perennial problems facing the Christian philosopher of history more deftly and more philosophically than did his successors. The problem of particularism and universalism, for example, (are the great masses of persons made to the image of God to be eliminated from "universal" history because they are not Jews or Christians?) and the problems of progress are handled respectively by his *logos* doctrine and by his distinction between the City of God and the Earthly City.

Orosius was a younger contemporary whom Augustine prevailed upon to do a supplementary work to his own *City of God*. Orosius follows Augustine in describing history as a drama in which God is more than a spectator; in His Providence He is an actor on the stage of history. Orosius pays more attention to historical data than Augustine had done, and he gives Rome a definite historic mission in making ready the world for Christ. "Neither is there any doubt," he tells us, "that it was by the will of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . that Rome was brought to such heights of power since to her, in preference to all others, He chose to belong when He came, thereby making it certain that He was entitled to be called a Roman citizen."⁸ Orosius is considerably more optimistic about the future than Augustine, for,

without glossing over the evil in the world, he finds that times kept getting better, and that the Christian can expect them to become progressively better in the future.

Augustine and Orosius were widely influential throughout the Middle Ages, and it was not until the twelfth century that a work of comparable magnitude was written. Between 1143 and 1147 Otto of Freising wrote his *Two Cities* in imitation of Augustine and Orosius. Otto is not the great theologian and philosopher that Augustine was, but he is a considerably better historian. For him, the function of the historian is to discover and tell the truth. Otto therefore rejected Augustine's apologetic aim in favor of relating the story of universal history, but he took a much narrower view of "universal" history than had Augustine. "The faithless city of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles still remains," he tells us, "but, since nobler kingdoms have been won by our people, while these unbelieving Jews and Gentiles are insignificant not only in the sight of God but even in that of the world, hardly anything done by these unbelievers is found to be worthy of record or to be handed on to posterity."⁹ Otto's stand on this point is typical of the Christian "parochialism" which Toynbee so strongly condemns—and which so many of his critics so obviously manifest. (Whether Christian "parochialism" is justifiable is another matter; here we only make the observation that it has been an authentic part of the Western Christian tradition since the Middle Ages.)

Dante produced a more sophisticated Christian philosophy of history in the later Middle Ages. In it he includes the usual Christian teaching on Creation, the Fall, the Redemption, and the Kingdom of God, which gave history the unity peculiar to Christian thought. But Dante goes farther and adds another note of unity within history itself by assigning all humanity the common purpose of human perfectability in time. "Upon all men whom a common humanity has lifted to the love of truth, and who have been enriched by the labors of the past, there rests, surely, this responsibility of so toiling for the future that posterity may be enriched by them. . . . The peculiar task of the entire human race is to realize the potency of the passive intellect;

Seven Books of History Against the Pagans, translated and edited by Irving Woodworth Raymond (New York, 1936), p. 263.

The Two Cities, translated by Charles Christopher Mierow (New York, 1928), p. 324.

first through speculation, and then through action."¹⁰ To achieve this development human beings need an ordered society so that they can live in justice and peace. This is the purpose of social and political institutions, which must ultimately culminate in one church and one state. The first factor in Dante's philosophy of history, then, is progress toward political unity and human perfectability. The second is Providence, which Dante believes is evident historically in such instances as the *Pax Romana* at Christ's birth, or the coming of a St. Francis or a St. Dominic at a certain point in history. The third factor is man's freedom, and the fourth is the Fall, which makes necessary political and ecclesiastical institutions.

The final major formulation of a Christian philosophy of history is Bossuet's *Discourse on Universal History*.¹¹ Like Augustine, Bossuet is an apologist seeking to justify the ways of God to the skeptics of his age. "The freethinkers," he tells us, "declare war on divine providence and they find no better argument against it than the distribution of good and evil which seems unjust and irrational since it does not discriminate between the good and the wicked."¹² Bossuet proposes to answer these freethinkers by showing how God shines forth so luminously in history that only the willfully blind can fail to find Him, and how the Christian religion has continually progressed while a succession of worldly empires have risen and fallen on the stage of history. Bossuet actually hurt the Christian interpretation of history by trying to prove too much, for although he did not eliminate secondary causes he assigned to Providence an unnecessarily willful, interfering role in human history. His God, it could be said, was made too much to the image and likeness of Louis XIV.¹³

These Christian philosophies of history all accept on faith the fact and the content of revelation, and they seek to explain history

¹⁰ Cited by Gerald Groveland Walsh, "Dante's Philosophy of History," in *The Catholic Philosophy of History*, edited by Peter Guilday (New York 1935), pp. 115, 119.

¹¹ This is not to deny that later Christians, such as Juan Donoso Cortés and Friedrich von Schlegel early in the nineteenth century, formulated their own versions of a Catholic philosophy of history. But these versions had no large influence in the world.

¹² *Sermon sur la Providence*, cited by Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago, 1949), p. 137.

¹³ Toynbee has severe, but generally just remarks about Bossuet in his *Study of History*, IX, 175-182.

within its context. They are more deserving of the label "theology of history" than philosophy of history because they think theologically rather than philosophically on the data available to them from history. They all give Providence a role in history, account for evil with man's free will and his sinfulness, and see the central fact of all history as the Redemption. They divide history into two parts: the first preparing for the Incarnation, the second preparing for the Kingdom of God by extending the effects of the Redemption to all mankind. The "universal" histories written in this Christian tradition concentrate on the Jews and the Christians; other peoples are included only insofar as they have been instruments of Providence in shaping the destiny of the Jews and the Christians.

The first notable departure from this standard Christian philosophy of history was made by Giambattista Vico early in the eighteenth century. Vico wrote in a transitional age between the older Christian thought and the Enlightenment. His view of history stands midway between the Christian theology of history and the modern secularized philosophies of history. Vico accepts revelation and believes that every word of the Bible is inspired truth, but in formulating his philosophy of history he neglects the Bible for such pagan sources as Homer and the early myths. The *New Science* was a terrifically ambitious project, for Vico thought that he had discovered the secret scheme that underlies apparent confusion in history and that he could therefore subsume all knowledge into one discipline which would enable him to set forth *a priori* the future or the past history of any people.

A Platonist, Vico thought that the history of each nation is an exemplification of the ideal eternal history. Each nation therefore follows the same pattern of development throughout its life. So identical are the patterns that Vico believes he can establish an accurate chronology of any nation simply from knowing the status of its present culture. What Vico was actually doing was using the history of the Graeco-Roman world as the archetype to which he tried to make all nations conform. There can be no room for the providential God of the Christians in such a theory of history. But Vico does not deny Providence. Instead he secularized it by making it work in a way that is "natural," "simple," and "easy." "Once these orders were established by divine providence," he says, "the course of the affairs of the nations had to be, must now be and will have to be such as our Science demon-

strates, even if infinite worlds were produced from time to time through eternity."¹⁴

A reading of the *New Science* shows Vico trying to hold incompatibles together in his system. He seems to accept a thoroughly deterministic theory of history, and still he believes in free will; he does not deny the God of the Christians, but he makes Him conform to the rigid pattern of history He created for all nations and Vico has laid bare. Vico's ambiguous position is well summed up by Thomas Berry in this way: "In his treatise Vico has neither denied nor transcended the view of history presented in the Christian religious tradition. Indeed he passed to a lower realm of thought. The transcendent has given way to the imminent, the supernatural to the natural, and, in a most impressive way, simplicity has given way to multiplicity."¹⁵

Little attention was paid to Vico until recent times. The prevailing view of history in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was the Progress theory, which was generally accepted by most thinkers in Western civilization until our own generation. The Progress view of history is basically a secularization of the Christian straight-line view. "Natural" laws of Progress replace Providence; all transcendent laws and agents are replaced by imminent laws and agents who realize the goal or purpose of history within historical time.

Progress is considered inevitable because knowledge is an accumulative matter: each generation knows everything known by previous generations, plus what it discovers itself and adds to the fund of human knowledge. In the eighteenth century it was felt that Western man could attain something approaching perfection if he rooted out tyranny and ignorance. "Nature has set no term to the perfection of human faculties," Condorcet wrote, "the perfectability of man is truly indefinite; and the progress of this perfectability, from now onwards independent of any power that might wish to halt it, has no other limit than the duration of the globe upon which nature has cast us. This progress will doubtless vary in speed, but it will never be reversed."¹⁶ In the nineteenth century Progress had become as certain as the setting of the sun each evening.

¹⁴ *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, translated by Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, N. Y., 1948), pp. 92-93.

¹⁵ *The Historical Theory of Giambattista Vico* (Washington, 1949), p. 109.

¹⁶ *Sketch for A Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind*, translated by June Barrachlough (New York, 1955), p. 4.

This advancement [Spencer wrote in 1851] is due to the working of a universal law . . . and in virtue of that law it must continue until the state we call perfection is reached. . . . The advent of such a state is removed out of the region of probability into that of certainty. . . . As surely as the tree becomes bulky when it stands alone . . . as surely as a blacksmith's arm grows large . . . so surely must the things we call evil and immorality disappear; so surely must man become perfect.¹⁷

Three different philosophies of history arose in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to challenge the prevailing theory of Progress. The first of these was Hegel's interpretation of history as the self-realization of the Divine Idea in time. A philosophical idealist, Hegel looked on states—which are the intelligible units of history—as successive objective realizations of the Divine Idea on earth. The essence of history, he tells us, is the absolute spirit or Divine Idea realizing itself through its dialectical development. Put another way, history is the implicit becoming explicit, the abstract becoming concrete. Hegel discerns the big pattern of history as a movement from East to West through four stages of development, of which Germanic Europe is the final stage. In each stage, subjective freedom is realized by a greater number of people, from the one in the Oriental empires to the all in the German state. Hegel also formulates a smaller-scale pattern of development for all institutions, as well as for thought itself—the famous Hegelian dialectic whereby each state or institution evolves, through the inner necessity of its own nature, through the three stages of thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Hegel insists that this development is necessary, but he admits that external conditions modify the pattern considerably. The Hegelian dialectic, as applied to history, therefore does not turn out as rigid as it seems at first sight, and it is no less optimistic than the Progress theory about the realization of a perfect state in future time.

The second philosophy of history to challenge the Progress theory was the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels. The basic factor in history, according to Marx and Engels, is the method of production dominant in a given society at any time. For the method of production determines class relations, and the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class

¹⁷ Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics* (American edition of 1865), pp. 78, 80.

struggles.”¹⁸ The state, religion, literature, all social institutions, and the culture of a society are determined by the economic interests of the dominant class. The dialectic, as with Hegel, is the pattern whereby historical evolution takes place through the necessary conflict between the economic classes. Marx saw history as having taken place in four ages (primitive communism, ancient slavery, feudal society, bourgeois capitalism), each of which generated its own negation. These are progressive epochs moving toward the final state of industrial communism, the perfect society of the future, a secularized Kingdom of God in time. The pattern is deterministic; conflict is the means whereby progress is achieved, and the end of history, the perfect society, will inevitably be reached.

In 1917 Oswald Spengler published his *Decline of the West*, which challenged not only the Christian view of history but also every secularized version of the Christian view which held for progressive improvement of humanity's lot on earth. Spengler revived the pagan theory of cycles to show that each unit of history, a civilization, goes through the same birth-growth-decline-death cycle that the human organism undergoes. Spengler is thoroughly deterministic about the cycle, and his only advice to Westerners, whose civilization is supposed to be in the last stages of decline, is that they freely and courageously face their necessary fate—like the Roman soldier who stood at his post at Pompeii until the lava from Mt. Vesuvius destroyed him.

This survey has been sketched so that we may understand what had happened to Western man's philosophy of history by the time Toynbee planned his *Study* in 1927. The original Christian theory of history had God and man as the two free actors in the drama of history; geography, economic institutions, and such were the conditioning factors or the setting for the drama. Moreover, the Christian theory of history admitted travail and evil in the world, but it was basically optimistic because it knew through faith that the purpose of history will be realized in good time, that God's will is done. This Christian view of history was secularized by denying Providence and excluding God from history (except for Hegel, of course, who makes God immanent within history), by substituting a perfect world state for the Kingdom of God as the goal of history, and by considering man a merely

¹⁸ This, of course, is the first sentence of the *Communist Manifesto*, which has been published in almost innumerable collections of source material.

acquisitive, pleasure-seeking animal whose happiness consists in the elimination of pain and the surfeit of pleasure.

Within restricted Christian circles, of course, the older Christian view of history has been kept alive. But keeping alive the theory of an Augustine or a Bossuet is not enough today. Discoveries in biology, anthropology and the other sciences have added tremendously to our knowledge of man's past. Moreover, history has developed as a quasi-science rather than a literary genre within the last century. These developments seem to call for a reformulation of the Christian philosophy of history, which has been replaced by various secularized versions and by the revived pagan cyclical view. Any inquiry into history which incorporates all or most of Christianity's truths is therefore deserving of serious consideration, even if it prove wanting in some respects, for a step in the right direction from Marx and Spengler and the Progress enthusiasts should be welcomed by Christian historians.

THE "FORMER" TOYNBEE

A Study of History is the work of a specialist in Greek and Roman history, an important point for the reader to keep in mind as he goes through the ten volumes of this long work. Mr. Toynbee follows the political framework that is common to students of this period of history, but he is thoroughly at home with art, literature, philosophy, and other aspects of culture that enrich a merely political history and make it a treatment of a "civilization" instead of a political unit. There seems little doubt, from a close reading of these ten volumes, that Toynbee's creation follows the same sequence as Vico's: he arrived at his pattern from his study of the Graeco-Roman civilization, and then he studied another twenty civilizations to discover uniformity in them. The reader is beguiled by the author who continually describes his procedure and frequently reminds us that the study is empirical. But what is apparently an empirical study, or a comparative morphology of civilizations, turns out to be a search among these civilizations for evidence to support a pattern arrived at from a study of one of them, and the application of that theory *a priori* to the others.

Although Toynbee is a specialist on Graeco-Roman history, he does not write his *Study* as an historian. He writes rather as an eighteenth-century *philosophe*, the well-rounded man who is at home with modern science, with the literature of all ages and all

cultures, who is intimately acquainted with the Bible (which is cited several thousand times), with classical literature, and with the classics of other cultures. Toynbee writes his *Study*, then, not as an historian or a philosopher or a theologian, but as a man—in the humanist sense—who lives in the Western Christian tradition but has read widely in the histories and the literatures of other cultures.

The work he has produced is therefore rich. But underneath it lies a skeletal pattern to which he faithfully adheres. It might be described briefly in this way: the intelligible unit of history is a civilization (through the first seven volumes), and the purpose of the inquiry is to discover the meaning of history through a comparative study of the world's civilizations. The first three volumes deal with the genesis and growth of various civilizations. In these volumes Toynbee arrives at suggestive "laws" of history, most important of which are the "laws" of challenge-and-response, and withdrawal-and-return. After examining the racist and environmentalist explanations of the genesis of civilizations, Toynbee rejects them as explanations in physical-science terms of a problem that is really spiritual. He finds that the genesis of any civilization can best be explained in terms of response to a challenge presented by the physical or human environment. If the challenge is sufficiently strong, but not overwhelming, a society's response to it brings a civilization into being.

Civilizations grow, he tells us, by continuing to meet successfully the challenges which confront them, challenges which are internal rather than external, spiritual rather than material. In seeking to "prove" this "law" Toynbee examines a number of arrested civilizations (Polynesians, Eskimos, and Nomads) to see why they failed to grow, and a number of fully developed civilizations to see how they grew. He finds that growth originates with creative individuals or creative minorities who generally pass their creative discoveries on to the masses through the process of "mimesis" or imitation. This process takes place according to the law of withdrawal-and-return—the most strained of Toynbee's laws and the one which has evoked most derisive criticism from historians. The creative individual or minority is supposed to withdraw from society for personal enlightenment and then to return for the task of enlightening the rest of men. Toynbee uses the examples—among many others—of St. Paul, St. Benedict, Mohammed, Machiavelli, Italy, and England, and

he suggests a similar role for contemporary Russia—which he could just as well have suggested for the United States withdrawing in isolation through the nineteenth century to return in the twentieth. This is the substance of the first three volumes.

The next three volumes, published as a unit in 1939, trace the pattern of breakdown and disintegration of civilizations. Here Toynbee enters on a more difficult field, but one of greater interest to our age because Western civilization is seen to be somewhere in the process of disintegration and we are anxious to know what Toynbee's prognosis—explicit or implicit—is for our future. He sums up breakdown under three main points: 1) a failure of creative power in the creative minority, which becomes a dominant rather than a creative group accepted by the rest of society; 2) a resulting withdrawal of allegiance and mimesis by the majority; 3) a consequent loss of social unity within the civilization.

Toynbee examines and rejects the deterministic explanations, such as Spengler's, that the breakdown of a civilization is inevitable and is outside human control. He also rejects the explanation that it is due to aggression from outside. In each case he tries to show that decay of technical achievement and failure against outside aggressors are the result of breakdown that has already occurred rather than a cause of breakdown. This involves a readjustment of the time-table on the growth and decline of civilizations that has been challenged by most historians. To cite a single example: Toynbee sees the breakdown of Hellenic civilization beginning before the Roman Empire and analyzes the Antonine period as an "Indian Summer" rather than an apogee of that civilization. The Roman Empire is thus a "rally" in the rout-rally-rout-rally rhythm of disintegration. The section on breakdowns of civilizations involves Toynbee in some obvious difficulties as far as accepted interpretations of history are concerned, and his wealth of scholarship is not sufficient to convince most readers that his *Study* is not in need of basic revision in this section. But it does include several suggestive "laws" which will become part of historical explanation for decades to come. The most important of these, in this writer's opinion, are three forms of the "nemesis of creativity:" idolization of an ephemeral self, idolization of an ephemeral institution, and idolization of an ephemeral technique. The basic point in each case is that an institution or a technique that is once

successful ensnares a people into using it when it becomes outmoded. Napoleon, for example, continued to rely on his original strategy and tactics even after they proved ineffective on the Iberian peninsula and on the Russian campaign. The bourgeoisie, again, were so successful with their production technique that they almost brought the roof of revolution down on their heads by failing to modify it—which, of course, they ultimately did with social legislation of various kinds and by working out a modified “partnership” relation with the proletariat.

Disintegration follows breakdown when the body social breaks into three fractions: the dominant minority, the internal proletariat, and the external proletariat. After discussing the characteristics and the role of each of these bodies, Toynbee devotes a 350-page chapter to a study of “schism in the soul” in disintegrating civilizations and in the behavior of individuals in such civilizations. Alternative ways of behavior, feeling, and life are rather arbitrarily set forth: abandon and self-control, truancy and martyrdom, the sense of drift and the sense of sin, the sense of promiscuity and the sense of unity, archaism and futurism, detachment and transfiguration. A considerable section is also devoted to the role of creative individuals who, in the disintegration stage, appear as saviors of one form or another (the military man, for example, the philosopher, and the religious leader) to rescue the disintegrating society.

Two last points remain in the section on disintegration. One is that standardization is the mark of disintegration, as differentiation is a mark of growth. The second is that disintegration does not proceed by a straight-line process but rather by a series of “routs” and “rallies.” In tracing out these routs and rallies Toynbee seems quite arbitrary, and most historians agree that he does considerable violence to history. At any rate, he concludes that the normal pattern is three-and-a-half beats: rout-rally-rout-rally-rout-rally-rout. The time of troubles which the West has been experiencing is an example of the “rout” beat, and the universal state is a “rally” beat.

Toynbee concludes his first six volumes by telling us that the genesis, growth, breakdown, and disintegration of civilizations is not a meaningless cycle, as with the pagans, but that it is creative process, the meaning of which can be understood only by an investigation of universal states, universal churches, and heroic ages in each disintegration; that is to be the subject of the remaining volumes. For these are something more than mere

byproducts of social disintegration created by the dominant minority, the internal proletariat, and the external proletariat respectively. The "key to the meaning of the weaver's work" lies in understanding the destiny of the universal church in which every Higher Religion seeks to embody itself.

The first six volumes can therefore be summarized this way: First, as an inquiry into history, in the sense of Augustine's *City of God* or Vico's *New Science*, Toynbee's *Study* has not yet solved the fundamental problem of the meaning of history. To borrow a simile Toynbee uses from time to time: at the end of the sixth volume he is like the mountain climber who has reached a ledge and can survey the slope and valley below, but he cannot see what lies above. Toynbee promises to continue the climb in the next installment with the hope of reaching the summit. Second, as a sociology of history or a comparative study of civilizations, Toynbee has formulated a number of laws that are deserving of serious consideration. They seem to provide for free will, for man's spiritual nature, and for a personal God Who is Creator, Final Cause, and Providential weaver of history. The author is careful to remind us throughout the study that there is nothing necessary in the working out of the laws he has discovered, that our civilization is not committed to the same process of disintegration as the twenty others he studies—but somehow the reader does not know whether these warnings against determinism are convincing. However, Toynbee does an effective job of dismissing such deterministic explanations for each phenomenon as that of Spengler and Marx, and he always insists that human history is a spiritual affair at bottom involving man's response to challenges confronting him.

THE "NEW" TOYNBEE

The last four volumes of Toynbee's *Study of History* differ markedly from the first six. In them he treats universal states, universal churches, and heroic ages, as he announced he would, as well as the prospects of Western civilization, and the "inspirations of historians," all in the original prospectus drawn up in 1927. But the work appears, at first sight, to lose its unity and to become a number of book-length essays on loosely related subjects. The change in organization, however, is not as important as the change in point of view and in Toynbee's judgment on the role of various factors in history.

The first change is Toynbee's rejection of the notion that a civilization is an intelligible unit of history.

We have found that a civilization can be studied intelligently in isolation so long as we are considering its genesis, its growth, or its breakdown . . .

The history of a single civilization ceases to be intelligible in isolation when it enters its disintegration-phase; and this discovery that our initial working hypothesis is not valid for the study of all historical situations has been confirmed by our subsequent investigations into universal states, universal churches, and heroic ages; for each of these investigations has carried us beyond the limits, both in Space and Time, of the particular civilizations whose declines and falls have generated the institutions that we have been investigating.¹⁹

The pattern changes also. Toynbee's first six volumes propose a pattern of history which, although not deterministic, is nevertheless cyclical rather than progressive. The twenty-one civilizations he treats are philosophically equivalent and apparently independent units of history. In the last four volumes Toynbee abandons this cyclical pattern in favor of a progressive pattern that introduces a qualitative principle to replace the philosophical equivalence between civilizations. The original pattern, which put all twenty-one civilizations side by side philosophically, is revised into these six stages:

- 1) The Primitive Societies, which are legion.
- 2) The Primary Civilizations, which are seven.
- 3) Eight Secondary Civilizations, which are derived from the primary ones.
- 4) The Higher Religions, which are apparently twelve.
- 5) Eight Tertiary Civilizations, of which Western Civilization is one.
- 6) The Secondary Higher Religions, which are eleven or so exotic religions, such as Kabirism, Baha'ism, Bedreddinism, The T'ai-p'ing, and Jodo Zen.²⁰

This chart is somewhat misleading in that Toynbee does not seem to expect any further development from the secondary

¹⁹ *A Study of History*, VIII, 88-89. Hereafter we shall refer simply to volume and page of the *Study* without giving the title.

²⁰ Extracted from Table IV, "Primitive Societies, Civilizations, Higher Religions," in the appendix of Volume VII. This volume, in the writer's opinion, is the crux of the *Study* and in it is to be found Toynbee's final view of history.

higher religions. In the last four volumes he concludes that the purpose of a civilization is to give birth to a Higher Religion, and he concludes that the prospects of the future depend on four Higher Religions (Christianity, Mahayana Buddhism, Islamism, and Hinduism) cooperating harmoniously to concoct some sort of new religion acceptable to all, or, more properly, offering four variations of the worship of God. On the surface, Toynbee's *Study* seems to be approaching Augustine's *City of God*—without Toynbee committing himself unreservedly to a Christianity which he seems to understand and to appreciate as *one* of the ways in which God has revealed Himself to man. The Hellenism of the first six volumes wears thin in the last four as religion takes over. The first six volumes, indeed, can be considered profane history, and the last four sacred history. It is most important—and most difficult—to understand this fundamental change in the *Study* if one is to pass judgment on the work as a whole. Let us suggest, at the outset, that the change is due partly to the nature of the inquiry and partly to “challenging and transforming experiences” that the author underwent in the interval between the publication of the first six volumes and the writing of the last four.

A *Study of History* is an inquiry into the meaning of history, which if intelligently conducted by a man of good will, would inevitably transcend a comparative morphology of civilizations to arrive at religious history—for a search for the ultimate in history is bound by the nature of things to lead to God. That is why Toynbee qualifies earlier definitions as he proceeds, and rejects certain assumptions that were once helpful but are no longer valid. This has annoyed many reviewers who consider him inconsistent, but the procedure is quite legitimate and it should not annoy anyone who understands that the *Study* is an inquiry into history rather than history itself. This change makes additional demands on the reader who is already overburdened with Toynbee's vast erudition, but there is no way that he could have done otherwise and remain intellectually honest.

The fundamental change between the first six and last four volumes is also due to the world upheaval between 1939 and 1946, when Toynbee returned to work on the *Study*. It is understandable that the Second World War and the West's failure to win the peace could change a mature person's point of view considerably, but one cannot help wondering how seriously one should treat Toynbee's vision of millions of years of history if the vision is

altered fundamentally by the events of a mere seven years. But the change was also due to Toynbee's personal affairs. "At the same time," he tells us after alluding to the Great War, "my inner world had been undergoing changes which, on the miniature scale of an individual life, were, for me, of proportionate magnitude."²¹ Toynbee seems to have wrestled with difficult religious and moral problems personally, which must be mentioned here because his *Study of History* becomes as personal in the last four volumes as an autobiography or a lyrical poem. During this interval Toynbee seems to have approached intellectually close to the Catholic Church and then to have withdrawn from it because of its hard exclusiveness, its jealous God, and its undeniable claim that it alone was founded by God. At any rate, Toynbee was divorced from his first wife, Rosalind Murray, who was herself a convert to the Catholic faith. These events undoubtedly influenced him to take the strange and almost inexplicable stand he takes toward Christianity in the last four volumes—to which we shall return later.

The last four volumes deal with the products of the three fractions of the body social during the period of disintegration: the universal state, created by the dominant minority; the universal religion created by the internal proletariat; and the pressures created by the external proletariat. Here Toynbee rightly says that the universal state is not an end in itself but that it serves as a means, primarily for the birth and progress of a universal religion. Here Toynbee leaves the reader—and the civilization under consideration—hanging in the air. For when a civilization has served its function of generating a new religion it is not going to wither quietly away. Moreover, a religion must take embodiment in a civilization. A religion cannot be indifferent to civilization, as Toynbee seems to think it should (for he condemns Christianity and Islamism for their exclusiveness), and Christians cannot subscribe to the theological equivalence of the Higher Religions that Toynbee substitutes in these volumes for the philosophic equivalence of civilizations in the earlier volumes.

The greater part of Volume VIII is a study of the contacts between contemporary civilizations. Toynbee has been bitterly criticized by some reviewers for treating modern Western civilization too harshly in this section, but we are inclined to feel

²¹ VII, vii.

that many of these criticisms—as Douglas Jerrold's *The Lie About the West*—tend to prove Toynbee generally correct rather than to refute him. Contacts between civilizations of different times, *i.e.* Renaissances, are treated in Volume IX. The rest of this volume and all of Volume X are a series of essays that contain some of the author's most valuable observations and some of his most annoying statements. These essays are "Law and Freedom in History," "The Prospects of the Western Civilization," and "The Inspirations of Historians."

The latter essay brings the original inquiry to an end with a section titled "The Quest for a Meaning Behind the Facts of History." In this essay Toynbee tells us:

The meaning behind the facts of History towards which the poetry in the facts is leading us is a revelation of God and a hope of communion with Him . . . God is the source from which Man derives his significance as well as his consciousness and his life, and the purpose of God that is the reason for Man's existence is that the creature should re-enter into communion with its Creator.

When the feeling for the poetry in the facts of History is thus transmuted into awe at the epiphany of God in History, the historian's inspiration is preparing him for an experience that has been described as 'the Beatific Vision' by souls to whom it has been vouchsafed. In this experience, God is seen face to face, and no longer through a glass darkly; and this means that the vision carries the Soul beyond the limits of History or of any other avenue of approach towards God through His revelation of His nature in His works. Yet, for every seeker after God, his own God-given glimpse of the marvels of the Created Universe — narrow-verged though his human horizon is bound to be — is a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path; and the historian's path ascends from a feeling for the poetry in History through a sense of awe at God's action in History to a participation in Man's fellowship with Man which brings him to the threshold of the saint's communion with God.²²

APPRAISAL OF TOYNBEE'S EPIC

What verdict is the reader to pass on this impressive work when he has finished the last essay? Can a simple verdict be passed? Toynbee tells us that for him history means "a vision—dim and partial, yet true to reality as far as it went—of God

²² X, 126, 128-129.

revealing Himself in action to souls that were sincerely seeking Him."²³ The historian's is only one of many angles of vision from which one sees God partially, and its value lies in this:

History's contribution is to give us a vision of God's creative activity on the move in a frame which, in our human experience of it, displays six dimensions. The historical angle of vision shows us the physical cosmos moving centrifugally in a four-dimensional frame of Space-Time; it shows us Life on our own planet moving evolutionarily in a five-dimensional frame of Life-Time-Space; and it shows us human souls, raised to a sixth dimension by the gift of the Spirit, moving, through a fateful exercise of their spiritual freedom, either towards their Creator or away from Him.²⁴

Toynbee confesses of himself that "the runner has not yet reached his goal."²⁵ The average Christian historian would agree with Toynbee and tell him sympathetically that the goal cannot be reached in this life except by those who have been granted a mystical union with God for a moment in this life. The next question is whether Toynbee has provided us with as adequate a philosophy of history as man can formulate in this life. Again the average Christian historian must return a negative verdict. An adequate philosophy of history must take into consideration the beginning, the course, and the end of history, and it cannot be at variance with any provable facts of history. Toynbee fails (in our judgment) in his refusal to accept the traditional understanding of the uniqueness of Christian revelation. His judgment on past developments is thereby clouded and his vision of the future is out of focus.

A Study of History must be considered an impressive failure—an epic that failed, or an epic that almost succeeded, depending on how one wishes to describe this latest classic in the genre of "philosophies of history." For Toynbee's *Study* is a renewal of the great Christian tradition against the three "heretical" theories of history in the field today: the Progress theory, Marx's dialectical materialism, and Spengler's deterministic cycles of growth and decline. The fact that *A Study of History* is an impressive failure does not justify our dismissing it without further consideration, for there is great value in the *Study* and it can be used profitably by any Christian historian to enrich his knowledge of man's long life on earth and to obtain certain

²³ X, 1.

²⁴ X, 2.

²⁵ X, 140.

insights that had never occurred to him. Let us therefore see something more of these ten volumes.

(It should be remarked parenthetically that the author has promised an eleventh volume of maps and a gazetteer of place-names, and an even more potentially valuable volume of "reconsiderations" or *retractiones*, as Augustine used the word. This last volume will be written, the author tells us, after he has made a trip around the world this year (1956) and settled down to take a synoptic view of the criticisms that have been made of his *Study*. The work stands complete as it now is, then, except for the revisions that the author will make in his *retractiones*.)

Let us evaluate the worth and the usefulness of this *Study* under a number of observations:

1) *It is a large synthetic work.* Most historians condemn such a study *a priori* as attempting the impossible. The historian's task, they are convinced, is to work with minutiae carefully and "scientifically," to study a small section of the past with a microscope. This is good work, of course, but there is also need of the large synthetic work to give us an insight into the meaning of history and the pattern—if there be one—on which human history develops. In recent decades groups of mature historians have tried to give us the long view by producing cooperative works covering many centuries and many areas. But such works have generally been disappointing; the microscopic work of many specialists does not add up to a telescopic view simply by putting them under a single title. A study such as Toynbee's must be the work of a single author, a competent historian who can make critical use of the many microscopic studies of his fellows to arrive at sound generalizations. Such a man must be well read in the literatures of the world, understand the social and physical sciences, or at least the conclusions of scholars in these fields. He must be at once a humanist, a philosopher, and a theologian. The demands are heavy, and no single person can fully qualify in all respects. But Toynbee comes as close as anyone to having the knowledge and the ability to produce the large synthetic work for which the times seem to cry out.

Toynbee's *Study* is extensive in two ways: vertically, he covers the entire time-scale of man's life on earth; horizontally, he takes into consideration every civilization about which mankind has knowledge today. It is good to have another twenty or twenty-two

civilizations brought to Western man's attention, for there is no doubt that we of the Western tradition have developed a parochialism which is both intellectually bad and practically harmful. Toynbee sees the unity of mankind as, in a different way, Pope Pius XII has seen it and preached it since he issued his first encyclical.²⁶ Toynbee's *Study* is the first "universal" history that can lay claim to universality. Although he has gone too far in this respect and at least through the first six volumes makes Western civilization merely one of twenty-one, nevertheless the over-all effect is good in that it calls attention to our parochialism and challenges it effectively.²⁷ (We shall see later that in the last volumes he admits the possibility that Western Christian civilization has a unique significance in world history and that the earlier Christian philosophers of history were right in seeing other civilizations minister to the one in which God became Man.)

2) *The style of the work makes heavy demands on any reader.* There are not likely a dozen men in the world qualified to read *A Study of History* without the aid of a good reference library. Toynbee's tremendous erudition has made his work too rich to digest easily. The man who can read a half-page Latin poem by Rutilius Namatianus, long quotations from Dante's early Italian, shorter verses from Goethe, and long passages of Greek verse, may still find himself troubled by casual references to the problem

²⁶ In *Summi Pontificatus*, Pope Pius XII wrote of: "A marvellous vision, which makes us see the human race in the unity of one common origin in God 'one God and Father of all, Who is above all, and through all, and in us all,' in the unity of nature which in every man is equally composed of material body and spiritual, immortal soul; in the unity of the immediate end and mission in the world; in the unity of dwelling place, the earth, of whose resources all men can by natural right avail themselves to sustain and develop life; in the unity of the supernatural end, God Himself, to whom all should tend; in the unity of means to secure that end."

Toynbee tries to assert this unity against Christian and secularist historians, most of whom would not deny but simply ignore it. Toynbee can be shown to agree with the pope's "vision"—except for the last phrase, from which he vigorously dissents.

²⁷ There is a sense in which Western "parochialism" is correct in that from the eternal point of view the history of other peoples than the Jews and the Christians is no history at all. But such a view usually connotes a smugness and a narrowness of view which implies that non-Western cultures are not deserving of examination, and sometimes almost implies that God's grace cannot reach out to non-Western people except through Western missionaries who must first Westernize the non-Western people to make them fit recipients of both culture and God's grace.

of Bedreddinism in the Ottoman Empire, the role of Ts'in She Hwang-ti, previously Cheng, king of Ts'in, the differences between Kabirism and Sikhism, or the "frustration of Evyenios Voulgharis." Much of the difficulty comes from the Western reader's parochialism, which Toynbee's *Study* does something to correct. At any rate, one who has carried the formidable task through will come to know something about such subjects as Siddhartha Gautama, the Hittite war bands, the Sikhs, the various forms of Islamism and Hinduism, and he will have at least a beginner's appreciation of non-Christian cultures.

When the nature of the work is remembered, Toynbee must be credited with having written well. Many historians have condemned him for not writing either journalese or in scientifically accurate phraseology. As for the first complaint, Toynbee writes as one educated on the classics, in long, complex sentences—a style quite proper for the conveyance of complex thought. As for the second complaint, it reflects the inroads made on a literary form by natural science, for many historians would prefer to eliminate words in favor of signs that can have only one meaning and carry no connotation at all. Toynbee complains in a footnote²⁸ that the resources of language are still inadequate for a work such as his, but that he has tried to employ traditional language whenever possible. His phrases are rich with connotations borrowed from myth and metaphor and from the classics of all tongues. At times, however, he seems unnecessarily stilted and desirous of parading his learning, especially in the use of foreign phrases when the English phraseology is obviously as good.

The most valid objection to Toynbee's phraseology is that he resorts to biological terminology in discussing states, empires, civilizations, and other societies. This is a typical passage to illustrate the danger involved:

These divers endings of universal states bear concordant witness to the craving for life by which these institutions are animated. So strong is this craving of theirs that they refuse to forego their claims to be brought into existence and to be allowed to live out their normal terms, and sometimes even refuse to pass out of existence after having duly realized their natural expectation of life.²⁹

²⁸ VII, 421.

²⁹ VII, 6.

Perhaps there is no other way to write about these institutions, but by using biological language in referring to them throughout ten long volumes Toynbee inadvertently creates the impression that they are supersized organisms with souls, bodies, and human faculties, that they breathe and live and die as we men do. Such is not his intention, for he labels such a view of the state or any other institution as blasphemous; nevertheless, his language breathes life into them. The reader must therefore keep on guard against the picture that this metaphorical language inches into his mind as he reads through one volume after another.

3) *The Study is marred by many inaccuracies of fact and obviously unsupportable interpretations.* No historian is competent to check Toynbee's accuracy in more than his own limited field of specialty. This author has found wrong dates and other misstatements of factual matter in the *Study*, but the cases are relatively few for so extensive a work. The factual data in Modern European history is reasonably accurate. Other historians have pointed out that inaccuracies abound in their respective fields, a professor of Greek history,³⁰ for example, claiming that there are literally "thousands" of mistakes in his field of specialty, and a professor of Central European history³¹ saying there are "many" inaccuracies in the treatment of Central Europe.

This defect comes from Toynbee's frequently injudicious use of secondary sources. Anyone treating the history of mankind as a whole must use secondary sources for most of his work. But he should check these sources to see how they are accepted by the scholars in each field, and he should have strong reason to believe they are substantially without factual error if he is to take his "facts" from them—for obviously no one can check personally every "fact" in ten volumes delving into all of the world's history. Toynbee frequently uses second- or third-rate sources when first-rate treatments of the same subject are available. He is especially negligent in keeping up with the latest developments of scholarship in each field—an almost superhuman task, but one which his project imposes upon him.

³⁰ Professor David M. Robinson, "The Historical Validity of Toynbee's Approach to the Greco-Roman World," a paper read at Loyola University's Symposium, *The Intent of Toynbee's History: A Cooperative Appraisal*, November 18-19, 1955.

³¹ Professor Oscar Halecki, "The Validity of Toynbee's Conception of the Prospects of Western Civilization," a paper read at the same Symposium.

The inaccuracies in the *Study* mar it, for each mistake is a defect detracting from the perfection of the finished work and scarring its beauty. Moreover, they make the reader feel that he cannot trust the author's accuracy in those areas which he must take on faith in Toynbee's accuracy. Nevertheless, the existence of a few hundred factual errors in these ten volumes—or even a few thousand—does not of itself invalidate *A Study of History*. The structure of the whole does not depend on factual data. They are rather the material with which the structure is dressed. An occasional defective brick mars the beauty of the building but it does not make it a defective structure.

4) *Toynbee's "laws of history" are deserving of serious consideration.* A study of these "laws" is a difficult and a delicate matter that is primarily the concern of the sociologist of history, for "law" is used here in the sense of regularity of pattern in the history of human affairs. Human affairs, of course, are not physical affairs of the human body, but man's action as man, as a rational, spiritual creature. Toynbee searches for such laws or regularities of history throughout his entire *Study*, but he faces the question directly in the book-length essay on "Law and Freedom in History" in the ninth volume. In this essay he attacks modern historians who, in reaction to Christians like Bossuet, have denied that there is any law of God discernible in history. He then proceeds 1) to show that there are laws or regularities to which human affairs are amenable without destruction of man's freedom; 2) that these laws are not inexorable, but are tendencies which work out within certain rather wide limits; 3) that sometimes human affairs prove recalcitrant to these laws, and they do not work at all; and 4) both the working and occasional non-working of these laws of history is explainable in terms of man's creative responses to challenges.

Finally, Toynbee moves from sociological considerations to a theology of history in seeking to reconcile law and freedom by means of the thesis "that Man does not live under one law only; he lives under two laws, and one of these two is a Law of God which is Freedom itself under another and more illuminating name."³² This is the "Law of Love."

The Law of Love is the one law that can never be served involuntarily. There is not, and cannot be, any externally applied coercion to obey this law, or any externally imposed punishment for disobeying it. The

³² IX, 395.

punishment for disobedience is inherent in the act of disobedience itself; for, in using his God-given freedom to reject the ideal in which the Law of Love consists, a human soul that has been created 'to glorify God and fully to enjoy Him for ever' is rejecting 'the true end of Man,' and is running, self-driven, into the disaster that overtakes Man through the inexorable working of the Law of Subconscious Human Nature, if he fails to respond to God's challenge to rise to the service of the Law of Love by using his God-given freedom to choose what is the will of God for him. Moreover, even this self-inflicted disaster is no final judgment and no irrevocable doom, since mundane disaster brings with it the opportunity of learning through suffering for any sinner who repents of his sin and is moved by his penitence to seek the aid of God's grace.³³

Such is Toynbee's statement on laws in history. Now let us see how he formulates various "laws," such as that of challenge-and-response or that of cycles of disintegration. We are given to believe, from his procedure, that he discovers these "laws" empirically. At the beginning of each step of the inquiry he proposes to proceed "along our customary empirical lines,"³⁴ or "have recourse to our well-tried empirical method of investigation."³⁵ What Toynbee actually does is to discover his "laws" by flashes of insight—some of them the work of genius, and some rather ludicrous—and then to "prove" them "empirically" by finding whatever evidence he can, sometimes by a considerable straining of the past. The reader is occasionally deceived by being offered two or three possible "laws" or explanations, but after two or three such experiences he knows at once which Toynbee has elected to accept. The procedure is legitimate in an inquiry, of course, because an inquiry is supposed to exhaust possible explanations and forestall possible objections. But the fact remains that Toynbee's laws are not arrived at empirically.

In respect to "laws" and patterns in history, Toynbee occupies a curious position among philosophers of history. The two general patterns, we have seen, are the pagan cyclical pattern and the Christian and Progress straight-line pattern of historical development. (There have been modifications of both basic patterns, of course, but the only basic modification before Toynbee is Vico's.) In the first six volumes Toynbee seems to accept the

³³ IX, 405.

³⁴ IX, 6.

³⁵ IX, 440.

cyclical pattern, but with intimations that it is not simply cyclical. In the last four volumes he accepts a progress view of history without surrendering the cyclical pattern. The new pattern can perhaps best be described as spiral. This final position is summed up thus:

The foregoing observations are all illustrations of our more general finding that cyclical movements in human history, like the physical revolutions of a cart-wheel, have a way of forwarding, through their own monotonously repetitive circular motion, another movement with a longer rhythm which, by contrast, can be seen to be a cumulative progress in one direction, even if we cannot be equally sure that this course has ever been set for it deliberately in execution of a plan.³⁶

A smaller pattern Toynbee finds through all history is a two-beat rhythm, which replaces the usual straight-line view of most Western historians. This is found in all things: challenge-and-response, withdrawal-and-return, rout-and-rally, appresentation-and-affiliation, schism-and-palingenesia, all the way to the alternation between Yin and Yang. There is a certain validity to seeing human development in this fashion, as long as the pattern is not seen for more than it is worth. We are thirsty and we drink, we are hungry and we eat. But to draw up a thirst-drink or hunger-eat pattern tells us very little, and it suggests a regularity of eating and drinking which may not be true. It seems that Toynbee tends, in similar fashion, to get something too much of rhythmic regularity into history.

It is impossible to generalize about Toynbee's various "laws." Most critics ignore his qualifications that these laws do not work out inexorably and that a civilization is still free—to some extent—to follow a different course from that taken by other civilizations. He can be fairly criticized, this writer thinks, for setting cycles too arbitrarily and without sufficient evidence. It is easy to gather evidence for almost any kind of pattern or "law" that one wants to hold, but it is not so easy to see these patterns and "laws" emerge from history and present themselves to one who does not already have them in mind. At any rate, Toynbee's "laws" are certainly a return to the Christian view of God and man when they are compared with the deterministic laws of the Progress historians, or with the alternatives proposed by Marx and Spengler.

³⁶ IX, 296.

5) *Toynbee's view of the prospects for Western civilization is an essential part of his Study.* This inquiry is needed, he tells us, because Western civilization is the only living civilization "that did not show indisputable signs of being already in disintegration,"³⁷ and because it has expanded to bring all other civilizations and primitive societies within its ambit. After taking the reader through the regular gamut of comparisons with other civilizations, Toynbee comes to the conclusion that it is still too early to make any sure prognosis about the future of the West, "because in A.D. 1952 the plot of this Occidental drama had not yet arrived at its denouement."³⁸ He finds that in the West there are unmistakable signs of disintegration found in other disintegrating civilizations, such as idolization of the state, various forms of escapism, and standardization. But at the same time there are differences suggestive of hope, such as the persistent vitality of a Higher Religion, and the tendency of the social body to fight off hardening into castes.

Toynbee therefore concludes that it is an open question at this point whether Western civilizations will follow the course of disintegration relentlessly pursued by other civilizations or whether it will successfully meet the internal challenges which have developed within it. His grounds for optimism lie in the possibility that "a transfer of energy from Economics to Religion at the opening of a post-Modern Age might ultimately come to a self-stultified Western *Home Economicus's* rescue."³⁹ Toynbee argues that a civilization possesses only a certain amount of energy, and since the sixteenth century this energy has been transferred more and more to economic activity. By now, his argument continues, a great part of economic activity has become so mechanical that it no longer requires spiritual energy—much like a man, who had been taking thought to keep his heart and lungs working all the time, found that they worked automatically, and was now free to devote his thoughts to other things. If Western man devotes his thought and energy to seeking God, Toynbee concludes, Western civilization can have a different issue from the pattern of the other twenty civilizations. To put the matter more succinctly, Toynbee urges that the secularist drive of modern history be reversed into a religious movement.

³⁷ IX, 411.

³⁸ IX, 465.

³⁹ IX, 641.

This brings us to the last observation and the most difficult to make briefly.

6) *Toynbee's attitude toward religion, and particularly toward Christianity, is the crucial issue in adjudging the Study a failure or a success.* This subject is handled most directly in Volume VII in the unit on Universal Churches, but it remains the pivotal point around which Toynbee's whole philosophy of history crystallizes. At the outset let us observe that the *Study* is a religious work. It is a theological epic describing the creative work of God on earth and man's creative quest for Him in time. It is permeated by a driving hunger to find and to justify the Providence of God in history. Moreover, it is a Christian work in that it returns to Christian beliefs in refutation of the various mechanistic and deterministic statements on the meaning of history—but, as we shall see, it is a peculiar and unorthodox Christianity that Toynbee professes.

In the last four volumes, as we have already suggested, Higher Religions become an end in themselves to which civilizations minister. Toynbee examines and rejects the thesis of Rutilus, Celsus, Frazer, and Gibbon that the churches are cancers on the body social. He then examines the thesis that they are chrysalises, or the fixed points around which a new civilization forms as the old one disintegrates. Toynbee admits that churches have served this purpose—but he insists that a church is something more than a mere chrysalis. Churches take the place in Toynbee's final view of history as a species of higher society, ends in themselves, the promotion of which is the purpose of the universal state. Churches therefore push aside other societies in the divine plan, and in the future, if mankind meets the challenge, they will worship God in harmony in them.

Toynbee's attitude toward various religions is revealing. He is harsh, even unjust, in his treatment of Judaism. It is difficult to see how he can refuse to consider it one of the world's living Higher Religions, but he considers it instead a fossil of the Syriac civilization. Any religion, it seems to this writer, that commands the faith and devotion of men today is a living religion, no matter what its derivation might be. Toynbee finds Judaism abhorrent because its God is a jealous God and its adherents are intolerant of other religions. It is not a religion of Love but rather a religion of strict Justice. But Toynbee finds it especially abhorrent because it is a tribal religion identified with a

people and taking the form of nationalism in modern times, which for Toynbee is the worst form of blasphemous idolatry.

The Catholic Church is treated understandingly and respectfully. Toynbee does not approve of the Church's claim to be the only true Church, nor does he like what he considers its harsh and intolerant treatment of heretics or dissenters throughout history. He condemns it, therefore, for the Judaic elements which he believes are really foreign to it, for in his opinion Christ taught a message of Love which too few Catholics have taken to heart. (St. Francis Assisi, of course, is his ideal Catholic.) The Catholic position on various controverted points is upheld faithfully by a certain Martin Wight (who, we have reason to suspect, is Toynbee himself), who is supposed to have read the manuscript and commented on it in long passages put into the footnotes and the annexes of the *Study*. The only reason one can offer for the inclusion of Martin Wight's comments is that Toynbee respects the Catholic and orthodox Christian position sufficiently to present it when he diverges from it.

Toynbee's attitude toward Christ is equivocal and—to this writer—puzzling indeed. He compares Christ to the other saviors, but he considers Him unique among the god-saviors of civilizations. In one place he tells us:

When we set out on this quest we found ourselves moving in the midst of a mighty host, but, as we have pressed forward, the marchers, company by company, have fallen out of the race. The first to fail were the swordsmen, the next the archaists and the futurists, until only gods were in the running. At the final ordeal of death, few, even of these would-be savior gods, have dared to put their title to the test. And now, as we stand and gaze, a single figure rises and straightway fills the whole horizon. There is the Savior.⁴⁰

And again:

In the Person of Jesus Christ, Very God yet also Very Man, the divine society and the mundane society have a common member who in This World is born in the ranks of the proletariat and dies the death of a malefactor, while in the Other World He is King of God's Kingdom, a King who is God Himself.⁴¹

These seem to be unequivocal assertions of Christ's divinity, and they are not explicitly made of Mohammed or Gautama or any other savior or founder of a religion. But Toynbee does not

⁴⁰ VI, 278.

⁴¹ VI, 162-163.

conclude from Christ's divinity that the religion which He founded has any objective claims over other religions. The prayer with which he concludes his *Study* "(London, June 15, 6.25 p.m., after looking once more, this afternoon, at Fra Angelico's picture of the Beatific Vision)" sets up a parallel among the four Higher Religions that at one reading seems reverent and at another blasphemous. It begins:

Christe, audi nos.

Christ Tammuz, Christ Adonis, Christ Osiris, Christ Balder, hear us, by whatever name we bless Thee for suffering death for our salvation.

Christe Jesu, exaudi nos.

Buddha Gautama, show us the path that will lead us out of our afflictions.⁴²

It is difficult and puzzling, then, to decide in what sense Toynbee accepts the divinity of Christ. He seems to want to be Christian—and something more, in a mystical Platonic sense of arriving at a Divine Idea of religion which denies no Higher Religion but transcends them all. Toynbee is convinced that modern Christianity is a "hybris", pure Christianity mixed with foreign elements, and he believes that original Christianity did not hold the exclusiveness nor the harshness as regards other religions that one finds in modern Christianity. Toynbee believes that he is a Christian in the original sense of the word.

We must conclude, then, that Toynbee is a different kind of Christian. He explains his position most clearly in answer to one of Martin Wight's comments. Mr. Wight is quoted as objecting to Toynbee's view that the four Higher Religions are "four variations on a single theme" and that they are not in discord but in harmony. Toynbee answers him by admitting that Wight's exposition of the relationship of Christianity to the other Higher Religions is a correct statement of the Christian position and goes to the heart of the matter. He therefore agrees with Wight that his own solution of the matter is not in traditional Christian terms, and that he considers any claim to the possession of a definitive revelation or a monopoly of Divine Light is both sinful and blasphemous. On these terms, Toynbee concludes, "I am not entitled to call myself a Christian."⁴³

Toynbee can best be qualified as a relativist in religion. He does not consider all religions of equal value by any means, but

⁴² X, 143.

⁴³ VII, 428.

the four Higher Religions are four ways to the same Truth. They are the means God has adopted to evoke worship from four psychological types. This diversity shows the wisdom of God and is, indeed, "a hall-mark of God's creative work, [for] to enable human souls to receive the divine light is the purpose for which Religion exists, and it could not fulfil this purpose if it did not faithfully reflect the diversity of God's human worshippers."⁴⁴ Why, then, one might ask, are there not as many religions as there are people? Are there four, and only four types of people? The answer apparently lies in one of Toynbee's flashes of insight. He finds the key in C. G. Jung's *Psychological Types*, wherein the latter describes four different psychological types into which human persons can be divided. Each of these is ministered to, Toynbee believes, by one of the Higher Religions.

This religious relativism leads Toynbee to the most lyrical but most untenable—both historically and theologically—conclusions. The real problem of the future, he is forced to conclude from his reasoning, is whether the four Higher Religions will unite mankind in a sort of spiritual quartet, or whether they will fail to respond to this challenge. There are grounds for hope, he assures us, that "the diversity of religions might resolve itself into a harmony in which the unity of Religion would be made manifest."⁴⁵ But this, certainly, is impossible unless Christianity and Islamism change their very essence, for they are exclusive religions and they cannot readily become polytheistic or syncretistic. Toynbee is asking the Higher Religions to adopt the way of Mahayana Buddhism, which accepts the multiplicity and equality of the different roads to Spiritual Truth. And in his wishful conclusions that the four Higher Religions spread through the world to worship God in harmony, he personally seems to take the Buddhist step of departing from historical reality to take refuge in a dreamland of fantasy and metaphysical abstraction. History does not suggest that Toynbee's hoped-for eventuality shall come to pass, nor does theology suggest that it would be desirable. For while Toynbee is right in telling us that God is Love, he must not forget that He is also Truth. Although Toynbee does not see it this way, he is asking Christianity to abdicate its divinely appointed mission to make room for other religions, all of which have equally good claims. Thus, as we indi-

⁴⁴ VII, 442.

⁴⁵ VII, 444.

cated earlier, his former philosophic equivalence of civilizations has been replaced by a theological equivalence of religions—and both are based upon a relativism that Toynbee accepts in order to transcend the parochialism of Western Christendom.

CONCLUSIONS

Let us summarize our appraisal of this massive and erudite work under the following points:

1) It is an effective repudiation of the mechanistic and deterministic theories of history which have occupied the field since the development of history as a "science." Moreover, it rescues history from the false position of being a social science in imitation of the physical sciences. It sees history rightly as a drama with God and Man the free actors, with the scenery and the drama created by God, and with Man free to play the role assigned to him—or, by refusing, to turn the drama into tragedy. It is a hopeful symptom of our age, we think, that such a work could be published by a respectable historian and could open with explosive force arguments that have been considered closed issues for some time. Toynbee does not have all the right answers, but he has asked the right questions—which "scientific" historians thought only children and primitives asked. And it is good to have right questions asked again.⁴⁶

2) Christians can be grateful to Toynbee for having reminded Westerners that our civilization has been corroded by secularism and that its healthy future depends first of all on a return to religion. Christopher Dawson has put this point well:

However strongly we dissent from Dr. Toynbee's theological views, we can agree fully with him in his conclusions that the vital problem that confronts Western Civilization today is to prevent the modern secularized world empires from destroying one another, and humanity with them, and to bring back civilization to an awareness of its true function as a means to a higher end, as a bridge builder and a road maker, an interpreter and a peacemaker, preparing the way for spiritual unity.⁴⁷

3) As a corollary to the above conclusions, *A Study of History* is the first Christian philosophy of history of consequence since

⁴⁶ Toynbee substantiates this conclusion, as well as our sixth "observation," in an article we read after finishing this appraisal. See Arnold J. Toynbee, "A Study of History: What I Am Trying To Do," *International Affairs* (January, 1955).

⁴⁷ "Toynbee's Odyssey of the West," *The Commonweal* (October 22, 1954), p. 67.

Bossuet. It reintroduces Providence into history, treats men as a free spiritual being created by God to enjoy the Beatific Vision. Moreover, it is more truly a "universal" history than Bossuet's or any earlier Christian's "universal history," for it sees the unity of mankind in creation and in destiny, and it attempts to work out a theory of history to give all mankind a place. In this sense it is a richer and fuller inquiry into the meaning of history than any previous Christian study. One of its assets is that it transcends a parochialism which historical circumstance thrust upon Western Christendom.

4) It contains many flashes of insight, legends, tales, short biographical sketches, essays on problems of history, and a tremendous store of information that the student of history and the teacher will find invaluable. Toynbee's *Study* can be rejected as an adequate theology of history and still be used as a storehouse of information with which one can increase his own knowledge, put the history of Christendom into something more like world focus, and broaden out Western man's parochialism.

5) As an inquiry into history, however, Toynbee arrives at an untenable theological position. In treating Christianity as a single religion he seems oblivious of the scandalous schisms and the vast theological chasms among the various Christian religions. Moreover, in advocating diversity of religion as necessary to serve the diversity of psychological types of humankind, Toynbee does not seem aware of the possibility of diversity within the one true religion. He praises Father Matteo Ricci for his adaptation of Catholic worship to Chinese customs, but he does not consider the possibility of a similar missionary effort in the future. To put it another way, in an even more literal sense than Belloc said "Europe is the Faith"—and Douglas Jerrold seems still to say—Toynbee implicitly accepts the identification of Christianity and Western culture—a point against which the Holy Father warned Catholics several times in 1955. Recent developments in the Catholic Church should have suggested to Toynbee that a true faith can serve all mankind and that there can be diversity within the unity of that faith. Failure of Catholics to understand that point is one of the unfortunate scandals in the history of the Church, but it is the failure of parochial-minded Catholics and not a failure of the Faith.

A Christian philosopher of history, it seems to this writer, can agree with much of Toynbee's inquiry. By accepting Christianity and Christian revelation as it has been traditionally expounded

by the Church, however, he must part company with Toynbee on his theological relativism and on his resultant thin hope for the future. Toynbee is not convincing when he tries to exercise Christian optimism. A Christian philosopher of history, it seems to us, is likely to formulate some pattern whereby the one true religion can serve as the chrysalis of the civilization now aborning, as it once served as the chrysalis of our own Western civilization. Recent developments point in the direction of a unity of civilizations that seems in keeping with God's plan, insofar as we can apprehend it. And the universal religion in that civilization can well be the true religion. But the Christian philosopher of history hesitates to lay down the pattern of the future which is locked in God's mind and made known to us only fragmentarily and darkly through prophecy. "The wind breathes where it will,"⁴⁸ and "the kingdom of God comes unwatched by men's eyes."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ John, iii, 8. (Knox translation).

⁴⁹ Luke, xvii, 20. (Knox translation).

Arnold J. Toynbee: A Selective Bibliography on *A Study of History*

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A selective bibliography on Arnold J. Toynbee's *A Study of History* requires attention to three works of the author. Of major importance is the ten-volume comparative study of civilizations, *A Study of History*. The first three volumes (1934) analyzed the origin and growth of civilizations; the second three (1939) traced their downfall through a regular process of breakdown and disintegration. In 1947 D. C. Somervell published an abridgement of the first six volumes, with the author's approval. In the last four volumes (1954) Toynbee elaborated on particular aspects of the declination process, analyzed the fate of Western Civilization, discussed Law and Freedom in history, and explained contacts between civilizations. *Civilization on Trial* (1948) contains an essay entitled "Christianity and Civilization" in which the transition from civilizations as the proper unit of historical inquiry to civilizations as the handmaid of religion is clearly stated. In *The World and the West* (1953) Toynbee applied the doctrine of Challenge-Response to two aggressors: Graeco-Roman civilization and the "West." The response engendered in the first case was the conversion of the conquerors to new religions, ultimately Christianity. Speculating upon the destiny of the "West" Toynbee suggests a possible parallel denouement. It is with these three works that the critics are concerned.¹

Before dividing the critics according to their respective points of attack, it is possible to note some general characteristics that predominate among them. Interestingly enough, they note both the Augustinian and the Spenglerian strains in Toynbee's thought (where the two strains are diverse) and in the similarity of world situations in which they were written (where all three are similar).² Some of the reviewers deplore Toynbee's depreciating attitude toward science and technology. Many preface or conclude their criticisms with a recognition of the erudition and insight of the author, the significance of his work and the admira-

¹ For those interested in a general conspectus of Toynbee's works see Monica Popper (comp.), *A Bibliography of the Works in English of Arnold Toynbee, 1910-1954* (London, 1955), 60 pp. This lists books, articles, lectures. Authors with whom he has collaborated, lecture series in which he has participated, periodicals to which he has contributed are indexed.

tion he evokes. But with few exceptions will they grant that the pattern Toynbee produces is *right*.³ Frequently the critics give just the impression that Granville Hicks hoped to avoid, "that *A Study of History* is a congeries of brilliant passages in support of an untenable thesis."⁴ For some, as for Hicks, there are both merits and defects, but considered as a whole, *A Study of History* requires neither total approbation nor complete censure.⁵ For

² H. Mitchell, "Herr Spengler and Mr. Toynbee," *Royal Society of Canada Transactions*, XXXXIII (June, 1949), 103-13. This work centers around a comparison of Toynbee and Spengler and a rejection of the pessimism of both.

³ Some possible exceptions might be mentioned. F. L. Schuman in "Paradoxes of Dr. Toynbee," *Nation*, CLXXIX (November 6, 1954), 405-7, has enthusiastic praise for the "empirically validated hypothesis of the life cycles of civilizations," even though he notices contradictions also. Michael Tierney in "Toynbee's Study of History," *Studies*, XXXVI (January, 1947), 151-62, judges favorably those points considered vulnerable by other critics—even the applicability of the pattern to others than Hellenic Society. In M. E. Cameron, "Rehandling of Japanese History; Discussion of Toynbee's Version of The History of Japan," *Far Eastern Quarterly*, I (February, 1942), 150-60, the author shows that the pattern somewhat distorts both Chinese and Japanese history by the interpretation imposed. He considers it of value, however, since it reduces Japanese history to its proper scale in Far Eastern history, and elevates its significance in world history.

⁴ Granville Hicks, "Arnold Toynbee: The Boldest Historian," *Harper's Magazine*, CXCIV (February, 1947), 123.

⁵ One article can be taken as typical of these. Rushton Coulborn, "Review VII-X," *American Historical Review*, LX (July, 1955), 849-52. It is well to mention also some articles which provide only general evaluative remarks. R. Verlade, in "Mind of Middle Age; an Appreciation of Eric Gill and Arnold J. Toynbee," *Blackfriars*, XXIX (June, 1948), 283-4, considers philosophies of history only approximations of truth, commends Toynbee's approximation, and applauds his ultimate appeal to Faith and Revelation. Another article, R. P. Blackmur, "Reflections of Toynbee," *Kenyon Review*, XVII (Summer, 1955), 357-70, gets its friendly attitude toward Toynbee from the author's conviction that great books should stimulate the minds of readers. Richard Chase in "Toynbee: the Historian as Artist," *American Scholar*, XVI (July, 1947), 268-82 finds the strength of works such as Toynbee's in its capacity to fill "an unconsciously felt vacuum" with its "moral passion." In the above articles the interest or emphasis of the author precluded searching, detailed criticism. In another article, Thomas P. Neill, "Toynbee's Philosophy of History," *Historical Bulletin*, XXVI (January, 1948), 33-5, the author points out the irrelevancy of attacking historical minutiae. He then evaluates Toynbee's work as a whole, as a philosophy of history, and in relation to other philosophies of history. Albert Hourani, "Toynbee's Vision of History," *The Dublin Review*, No. 470 (Fourth Quarter, 1955), 375-401, criticizes numerous points in Toynbee while offering a principle of acceptance. "Yet it is possible to see the book

most, there are certain significant facets of Toynbee upon which criticism is centered. The most persistent and prolific of these critics are Pieter Geyl, a Dutch historian, and Douglas Jerrold, an English historian. Their debates with Toynbee will be considered first.

The Toynbee-Geyl debates revolve around methodology, historical theory, and the fate of Western Civilization. Pieter Geyl commenced his argument with Toynbee with an attack upon the latter's claim to an empirical methodology in *A Study of History*. Taking instance after instance Geyl accused Toynbee of "selectivity" from the "great cauldron" of history to "support his thesis." This has remained Geyl's basic criticism of Toynbee throughout his works. He found the methodology deficient in other areas, too. Toynbee's strenuous opposition to "nationalist" or "parochial" historians led him to ignore the importance of the national factor in history, yet he used historical incidents from national history to substantiate his thesis. Geyl applauded the illuminating insights and the interesting parallels of Toynbee's work, while deploring what he considered to be the vitiating effect of the imposition of such a rigid pattern upon them. He pointed to the analogical basis of *A Study of History* and warned that parallels in history are dangerous. Accepting the necessity of theories, Geyl demanded that they be used with caution, and with due attention to the multiplicity and uniqueness of historical reality. To him Toynbee's idea of a historical fact involves a subjective presentation of whatever facts are used to enforce his pattern.⁶ History, he has insisted, cannot be "metaphysical" (abstract), as Toynbee has made it, nor can it be required to give definite lessons for our present problems. This latter was more the province of the prophet. In his last article the Dutch historian explained why his criticism had all been negative. First, "this prophet usurps the name of historian," and this prophecy is "a blasphemy against Western Civilization." Geyl felt that

in another light, as an imaginative vision of history, having the same relation to fact as has poetry, gaining its value and validity not from its literal accuracy but from its originality, its internal consistency, the method of its expression and the help it gives us in understanding the historical process."

⁶ This accusation of a distortion of history to fit the pattern is the central theme of two articles: Ernest Barker, "Review of v 7-10," *International Affairs*, XXXI (January, 1955), 5-16; T. S. Gregory, "Professor Toynbee's Study of History," *Tablet*, CCIV (November 6-20, 1954), 442-4, 469-70, 492-3.

Toynbee's theory carried dire implications for Western Civilization, nor could he accept spiritual rejuvenation as a solution. Since the publication of Toynbee's last four volumes Geyl has been increasingly distressed by what seems to him Toynbee's abandonment of Western Civilization (which Toynbee accused of neo-paganism) to whatever its fate might be — and unconcernedly.⁷

Toynbee was hardly quiescent about all this. In a broadcast debate where some of the issues between the two men were examined simply and clearly, Toynbee made several significant remarks that should be compared with those of Geyl. He sought to refute the charge of selectivity with the contention that his choice is the "key" fact and from it his interpretations are made. He conceded that historical facts are subject to more than one interpretation, there being various facets to truth, not mutually exclusive. He asked only "possibilities" or "probabilities" from history. But meaning and sense—these he expected from history. He could see nothing gloomy nor inevitable about the fate of Western Civilization, if it would seek the spiritual salvation proposed. Since in the April, 1955, issue of the *Journal of the History of Ideas* Geyl had particularly attacked Toynbee as a historian, Toynbee issued a rejoinder to Geyl's article and another article carried by that same issue. *A Study of History* was not historical narrative, but historical knowledge used as a telescope to look at the universe as a whole. Whether intended or not, it was a polite way of saying Toynbee had not been touched.⁸

⁷ The Toynbee-Geyl debates can be found in the following works. Pieter Geyl, "Toynbee's System of Civilizations," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, IX (January, 1948), 93-124; "Prophets of Woe," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, XXVI (October, 1950), 587-602; *From Ranke To Toynbee; Five Lectures on Historians and Historiographical Problems* ("Studies in History"; Northampton, Massachusetts, 1952); "Toynbee the Prophet," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XVI (April, 1955) 260-74; *Use and Abuse of History* (New Haven, 1955). Only the last of these was not available to this author. Arnold J. Toynbee, "Rejoinder," *Journal of The History of Ideas*, XVI (June, 1955), 421. Pieter Geyl, Arnold J. Toynbee, and Petrim Sorokin, *The Pattern of The Past: Can We Determine It?* (Boston, 1949). This work includes a reprint of Geyl's 1948 article in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, a reprint of Sorokin's 1940 article in that same journal (to be discussed later), and the debate between Geyl and Toynbee broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1948.

⁸ In another article, not aimed at anyone in particular, Toynbee attempted to explain what he is doing. The article is actually a declaration of historical faith and of religious faith. Here only the former is of concern. Toynbee

The Toynbee-Jerrold debate emanated not from *A Study of History*, but from the application of these ideas to the present world situation in *The World and The West*. Sufficiently challenged himself by this work, Douglas Jerrold responded with a polemical document, *The Lie About the West*. The implication of the title proves to be the thesis of the book. To Jerrold Toynbee has denied: 1) the uniqueness of Christianity (thereby implying its falsity) and 2) the unique character and values of Western Civilization, which are founded on that singular religion. The first part of the accusation is based at least partly upon Toynbee's letter in the *London Times*, April 16, 1954, explaining the type of religion he expected the "West" to be converted to: a Christianity without theological exclusiveness. The second part of the accusation is based upon various passages from *The World and The West*. These include: his assertion of a community of good qualities and principles among civilizations; his conception of a "Moslem-Christian family"; his interpretation of the history of Western Civilization as a process of de-Christianizing secularization and degeneration into technology, without any attention to those advancements of personal freedoms which Jerrold thought more characteristic of recent World history. The issues between them, then, involve theology as well as history.

To Jerrold these were the basic issues between them, and if Toynbee were right, there was little reason to try to defend Western Civilization in its present crisis. But then, he insisted Toynbee was not right. Jerrold contended that if Toynbee accepted the cardinal doctrines of Christianity, i.e. the divinity of Jesus Christ, His Incarnation, His Church, then he must concede the uniqueness of the West. Answering this challenge in the pages of the *Times*, Toynbee denied that "Christ's merits" could be "appropriated" by any institution "secular or ecclesiastical." He later explained that a claim is tested "in performance." He accused Westerners of Pharisaism, supposing themselves to possess some "automatic spiritual privilege." More explicitly he charged Jerrold with identifying Western Civilization with Christianity. This "Chosen People" complex to Toynbee asked for: 1) a comparative treatment of civilizations by historians, instead of analyses of them in isolation in terms of one's own origin (nation or civilization); 2) incorporation of information from all the social sciences in these works; 3) discernment of possible laws in human affairs. Comparing this with Toynbee's work it is obvious that this is what Toynbee has been trying to do. Arnold J. Toynbee, "A Study of History: What I am Trying To Do," *International Affairs*, XXXI (January, 1955), 1-4.

was "blasphemous." It might be noted that in the process of argumentation the original dual problem has been reduced to a single one—and illegitimately. Both men seem to merge the two, yet the relationship between a culture and a religion and the relationship between a religion and other religions (the original two-headed problem) are distinct relations, qualitatively different.⁹

In seeking a method of correlating the varying comments and analyses of Toynbee by scholars from numerous fields it has seemed best to group them around the key topics appearing in Pieter Geyl and Douglas Jerrold since the handling of these topics reveals much about both Toynbee and the critics. The topics are: the nature of *A Study of History*; the validity of *A Study of History*, including critiques of the methodology (empirical, analogical, imaginative) and of the conceptual structure; particular religious aspects; Toynbee's attitude toward Western Civilization. As to the relative value of these articles, the reader can assess that himself by the excerpts presented from them. This author's evaluation of the articles will be made both explicitly (direct comment) and implicitly (the amount of attention given each article).

Diversity in criticism among scholars of one of their own number is not an uncommon occurrence, but when they cannot even agree upon what the subject of attack is doing, it is understandably difficult for them to evaluate his achievement and reach any agreement thereupon. Kenneth W. Thompson considers Toynbee a philosopher of history since he "applies to the facts of

⁹ The main works on the Toynbee-Jerrold debate are the following. Douglas Jerrold, *The Lie About the West; a Response to Professor Toynbee's Challenge* (New York, 1954). The same arguments advanced here appeared also in the *Tablet*, the February 14, 21, 28 and March 7 issues in 1953. Jerrold's article "World and The West Review," *Sewanee Review*, LXII (January, 1954), 56-83, is essentially the same. The *London Times*, *Counsels of Hope: The Toynbee-Jerrold Controversy* (London, 1954). This is a 38-page pamphlet containing correspondence that appeared in the *Times* in the spring of 1954 after the appearance of a review of two books on Toynbee—one being Jerrold's. Toynbee sought to further vindicate himself and explicate his position in opposition to Jerrold in another article, "Pharisee or Publican," *Hibbert Journal*, LII (July, 1954), 319-26. The central ideas of this article had already appeared in the *Times*.

P. L. Ralph in his article "Toynbee's Call to Faith," *The Saturday Review*, XXXVII (October 6, 1954), 18-20, finds at least one quality of endurance in Toynbee's last four volumes—the "defense of liberal humane values." This is a good three-page summary of the last four volumes.

history an underlying philosophy and writes of a time span that approaches the universal."¹⁰ In a similar vein Frank Underhill calls Toynbee's work "metahistory," by which he means a pattern of the whole complex past with the object of answering ultimate questions.¹¹ Just a shade of difference separates these two from Harry E. Barnes' definition. Emphasizing the spiritual interpretation employed by Toynbee, Barnes considers *A Study of History* not a history, but a "Theodicy," a "theology employing selected facts of history to illustrate the will of God . . ." ¹² Erich Kahler in a review of *Civilization on Trial* agrees that "the gist of his theory" is neither history nor philosophy, but "Christian theology."¹³ Two literary men, on the other hand, have given their attention to the essential poetic content in Toynbee's thought. For R. P. Blackmur Toynbee's monumental work is "a Poem in Action," while to Edward Feiss it is a "huge theological poem in prose."¹⁴ Crane Brinton seems to offer an eclectic definition of *A Study of History* as "a cosmology, theology, philosophy of history, encyclopedia, and tract for the times."¹⁵

The major portion of the Toynbeean criticism is concentrated on the validity of *A Study of History*. On the question of an empirical or scientific methodology the critics really divide and give battle among themselves. Geyl accused Toynbee of an *a priori* methodology. Aligned with him are Bertram Wolfe and R. H. S. Crossman.¹⁶ On the other hand, R. G. Collingwood accuses

¹⁰ Kenneth W. Thompson, "Toynbee's Approach to History Reviewed," *Ethics*, CXV (July, 1955), 287-303. This is one of the more complete articles, for Thompson gives Toynbee a three-fold consideration: his approach to the nature of history, his historical method, the points open to criticism.

¹¹ Frank H. Underhill, "Arnold Toynbee, Metahistorian," *Canadian Historical Review*, XXXII (September, 1950), 201-19.

¹² Harry E. Barnes, "Study of History Review," *American Sociological Review*, XII (August, 1947), 480-6. Barnes is very interested in the phenomenon of the Toynbee cult.

¹³ Erich Kahler, "Theology of Progress," *Nation*, CLXVI (June 19, 1948), 694-5. In line with this definition of the nature of the work, Kahler considers Toynbee's "theoretical machinery aged" and accuses him of "theological parochialism." He is behind the times, in other words.

¹⁴ Blackmur, *op. cit.*, 362; Edward Feiss in "Toynbee As Poet," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XVI (April, 1955), 275-80, makes an interesting distinction between the three levels of truth in Toynbee and the critics' intensity of attack on each.

¹⁵ Crane Brinton, "Review Vols. VII-X," *Yale Review*, XXXIV (Winter, 1955), 264. This is a short and rather insignificant review.

¹⁶ Bertram D. Wolfe, "Dissenting Opinion on Toynbee," *American Mercury*, LXIV (June, 1947), 748-56. R. H. S. Crossman in "Mystic World of Arnold

him of "historical positivism" and of "naturalistic history." According to R. G. Collingwood Toynbee merits these accusations because he disregards the continuity of history, conceiving of the historical process as severed into self-contained parts which are to be related to one another by the historian only externally. The life of society is a "natural and not a mental life," merely biological and understandable by biological analogies.¹⁷

That the question of analogy should arise in this context is not strange, since the point is that these analogies are from the sciences. The most incisive analysis of the use of analogy in Toynbee is that of Helmut Kuhn. He finds that Toynbee employs both a "horizontal" and a "vertical" analogy. In the former Toynbee compares phenomena qualitatively the same (same type or structural level); in the latter the phenomena are not qualitatively the same (different structural levels). Whereas there is no danger in comparing, for example, prophets to prophets, there is danger when one compares biological process to spiritual. Both can be valid, according to Kuhn, provided the hierarchical scale is observed in the latter. Toynbee is not always completely successful in this.¹⁸

Toynbee," *New Republic*, CXVII (July 14, 1947), 24-6, describes Toynbee's as a "Mediaeval" mind, fearful of science and hopeful of a spiritual escapism via Rome. There was a reply to Crossman's article in the *New Statesman and Nation*, XXXIII (March 15, 1947), 176, in which the author, Harold Binns, expressed complete agreement. Lawrence Stone in a very brief article entitled "Historical Consequences and Happy Families," *Spectator* CXCI (October, 1954), 526, makes the accusation of scientific pretensions along with unverifiable presuppositions. Charles A. Beard has very little comment to make in his two reviews in the *American Historical Review*, LX (January, 1935), 307-9, and XLV (April, 1940), 593-4, but he does warn that complete empiricism is impossible since all historians operate under presuppositions.

¹⁷ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford, 1946), 260 ff. E. D. Myers in "Note on Collingwood's Criticism of Toynbee," *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXIV (August 28, 1947), 485-9, contends that Toynbee deliberately repudiates both the methodology of the physical sciences and mechanical and biological analogies. For him Collingwood's criticism rests on his own contention that Western Civilization and Hellenic are not separate. On the other hand again, in Bohdan Chudoba, "Positivist Scion," *America*, XVII (October 30, 1954), 130, the author's thesis is the positivism of Toynbee.

¹⁸ Helmut Kuhn, "Review," *Journal of Philosophy*, XXXIV (August 28, 1947), 489-99. Kuhn provides a very provocative article. Among other points of interest he attributes the "vertical" kind of analogy to a Bergsonian type of biologistic metaphysics.

Still on the question of scientific methodology or not, G. A. Birks seeks to simplify the problem by multiplying Toynbees. There are three Toynbees: Toynbee the historian, Toynbee the scientist, Toynbee the philosopher. One hears too much about the philosopher and too little about the scientist. Syllogistically Birks attempts to prove that Toynbee is a scientist. The discovery of order in the complexity of the world is science, not philosophy. This is what Toynbee is doing, ergo Toynbee is a scientist. Questions of value arise from his conclusions because Toynbee uses growth-decay and similar terminology, hence the confusion as to whether this is science or philosophy. But it is science, and so the accusations of inadequate definitions one hears are misdirected, for the scientist uses concepts merely as instruments.¹⁹

References to the imaginative methodology of Toynbee occur in many places. This imaginative cast to the Toynbeean methodology is not, however, considered as simply a matter of the author making literary allusions. Thompson contends that the "twin pillars supporting his method of history" are science and fiction. Toynbee both looks for law, regularity in human affairs, and uses poetry, fable for illumination.²⁰ Underhill, an historian himself, pictures Toynbee at work, and arrives at the conclusion that he is not a "social scientist," but an "intuitive artist."²¹ The disconcerting thing about this intuitive artist, as Granville Hicks explains, is that he uses legends and poems not as illustrations, but to suggest truths. Nor is he afraid to rely on the "connotative functions" of language. The question of analogy arises, and fittingly so, in connection with this aspect of Toynbee's methodology too. Hicks warns that analogies and metaphors are rewarding when Toynbee writes as a poet, but troubling when these figures of speech become scientific formulae; or as Feiss put it: Toynbee should distinguish between analogy as illustration and analogy as argument.²²

¹⁹ G. A. Birks, "Discussion: Toynbee and His Critics," *Philosophy*, XXV (October, 1950), 336-40. Birks divides the critics into two classes: those for whom Toynbee says too much and those for whom he says too little.

²⁰ Thompson, *op. cit.*, 287.

²¹ Underhill, *op. cit.*, 206.

²² Hicks, *op. cit.*, 118. Feiss, *op. cit.*, 279. T. S. Gregory, "The Meaning of History: Mr. Toynbee's Approach," *Dublin Review*, CCXX (Spring, 1947), 74-87, deplored Toynbee's failure to follow his "poetic vocation" and write after the method of Thucydides or Virgil rather than as a scientist.

Two of the most important critiques of Toynbee's conceptual structure have been provided by a philosopher and a sociologist. The philosopher in a five-part conclusion questions Toynbee's "categories of interpretation." Several of these conclusions are of particular interest and appear in other critics. John Blyth first raises the issue of determinism in Toynbee. Many critics express an ambivalence toward accepting Toynbee's denial of determinism in his work; some are positively on his side. Blyth contends that Toynbee is confusing universal determinism and the limited kind of determinism found in casual relations. Given a uniform series of causes, as Toynbee has done, the effects must follow. Toynbee, then, has protected himself against the former kind of determinism, but not the latter. Blyth cannot accept Toynbee's congenial attitude toward both uniformity in history and the unpredictable. Ambiguity in terminology also leads to problems. Toynbee's ambiguous use of the words "societies" and "civilizations" causes him to generalize on one type of social entity and apply these generalizations to another type. Moreover, since Toynbee has only given these "societies" logical unity in his definition of them as "intelligible fields of study," how do we know they are entities subject to casual laws?²³

It is in this area that the sociologist attacks. Having pointed out certain incidental errata in his long review Petrim Sorokin moves on to concentrate on what to him are the two fundamental defects of the whole conceptual scheme. Toynbee errs first in assuming that his units of historical study, "civilizations," are units and not merely "congeries or conglomerations" of coexisting cultural phenomena. Secondly, if they are not such unities, they can hardly be subjected to uniform laws, particularly laws of growth and decline. Sorokin, however, doesn't completely reject Toynbee. He expresses an admiration for him and concludes that if Toynbee's statements were put in a different con-

²³ John W. Blyth, "Toynbee and The Categories of Interpretation," *Philosophical Review*, LVIII (July, 1949), 360-71. The question of irregularity-uniformity developed into a little side debate between Blyth and a Dr. Butler in the *Philosophical Review*, LIX (April, 1950), 230-6. The most significant feature of this debate was Butler's explanation to the effect that Toynbee uses the category of "nondeterministic law," which is not quite a law, but a "tendency" or a "pressure." A rather disappointing article from another philosophical journal is: J. W. Dowling, "Relative Archaism: a new Fallacy and Mr. Toynbee," *Journal of Philosophy*, XLIII (August 1, 1946), 421-35. The concern of the author is with the fallacy, of which Mr. Toynbee happens to be an example, although little in his work is tainted by it.

ceptual scheme (his own) they could be salvaged, and to good purpose.²⁴

The accusation of "definitional ambiguities" debilitating Toynbee's theoretical structure is echoed elsewhere. Watrick asked the question: if the civilization cannot be identified, how can historical attributes be given them? Besides this, he finds historical and sociological presuppositions which seem questionable to him. These are pointed out to have their source in a philosophical and ethical dualism.²⁵ The element of dualism in Toynbee has also been picked up by Lewis Mumford. Mumford, although commending Toynbee's break from some of the idola of modern civilization, yet regrets his captivity in an older idol: a dualistic metaphysics and theology (Matter and Spirit, External and Internal.) This cultural historian believes that such a dualism leads to an undervaluation of certain aspects of human life, and ultimately to Toynbee's renunciation of the world.²⁶

The lack of certain economic presuppositions bothers others, to a more and less degree. F. Neilson expresses this attitude in a moderate degree.²⁷ Charles Trinkhaus regrets the anthropological methodology of Toynbee as he feels this leads to a cultural relativism and an obscuring of the real idea of progress: material advancement and the good life for all.²⁸ A. H. Hanson considers

²⁴ Petrim A. Sorokin, "Study of History Review," *Journal of Modern History*, XII (September, 1940), 374-87. Bertram Wolfe, while pointing out minor errors in *A Study of History* condemns as a "fatal flaw" Toynbee's acceptance of the Bergsonian distinction between primitive and civilized societies (*op. cit.*, 748-56).

²⁵ M. Watrick, "Toynbee's Nine Books of History Against The Pagans," *Antioch Review*, VII (December, 1947), 587-602. Unlike Blyth, Watrick notes a pronounced antideterminism in Toynbee.

²⁶ Lewis Mumford, "Napoleon of Notting Hill," *New Republic*, CXXXI (November 8, 1954), 15-18. In an insignificant article, Owen Lattimore, "Spengler and Toynbee," *Atlantic*, CLXXXI (April, 1948), 104-5, the dialecticism of Toynbee is mentioned. Perhaps there is a connection between dialecticism and dualism.

²⁷ F. Neilson, "Review VII-X," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, XIV (April, 1955), 1-77. This is almost a 77-page reflection on texts, in which the author refutes and approves numerous topics and sub-topics from Toynbee, not just from an economic viewpoint either.

²⁸ Charles Trinkhaus, "Toynbee Against History," *Science and Society*, XII (1948), 218-39.

Toynbee's structure foundationless because it lacks due attention to the economic factor.²⁹

Religion obviously plays a large part in Toynbee's works. Some of the critics give special attention to particular aspects of religion in Toynbee. In view of his own background it is not surprising that Christopher Dawson is mainly interested in the Toynbeean concept of the relationship between civilization and religion. Dawson finds a distinct change between the first six volumes and the last four. The "philosophical equivalence" of civilizations and the accompanying cultural relativism of the earlier volumes are rejected in the latter. The Higher Religions, which now take over both the role of the civilizations as the proper units of study and their equivalence, embody in themselves a qualitative principle. The world has been laboring to produce these Higher Religions through four stages. Thus, according to Dawson, the cyclical theory gives way to a progressive theory and *A Study of History* moves from the plane of a "relativist phenomenology" to that of "a unitary philosophy of history." With civilizations now functioning as producers of the Higher Religions, Dawson's principal objection is that civilizations (including Western Civilization) which have no part in bringing forth these Religions seem superfluous.³⁰

The relation of religion and civilization so important to Douglas Jerrold and Christopher Dawson, finds another enthusiastic analyst in the person of J. H. Nichols. For Nichols the problem arises in connection with the Kingdom of God concept in Toynbee. In a very careful and thorough historical delineation of Toynbee's shift in focal points from nation states (in his earliest period of writing) to civilizations and thence to the City of God,

²⁹ A. H. Hanson, "History and Mr. Toynbee," *Science and Society*, XIII (1949), 118-35. In a more obvious manner than Trinkhaus Hanson displays the economic interpretation of history.

³⁰ The Dawson literature on Toynbee includes: "Religion and The Rise of Western Culture, Review," *Hibbert Journal*, XII (October, 1950), 3-10; "The Problem of Metahistory," *History Today*, I (June, 1951),?; "Toynbee's Odyssey of The West," *Commonweal*, LXI (October 22, 1954), 62-7; "Toynbee's Study of History: The Place of Civilizations in History," *International Affairs*, XXXI (April, 1955), 149-58. The first two articles were not available to this author. The last two are identical in argument, the latter having some additional comments by Dawson urging more intensive studies of the cultural components of civilizations. Garrett Mattingly in his review of *Civilization on Trial*, in the *Journal of Modern History*, XXI (December, 1949), 360-1, is also impressed by the significance of this change in Toynbee.

Nichols has two objections to offer. He fears that Toynbee's Kingdom of God is identified with membership in an ecclesiastical institution (probably the Catholic Church) and he deplores a certain vagueness in Toynbee about the relation of Church and civilization. To Nichols there is a definite difference between Church and civilization, nor should the church replace political, economic, cultural communities.³¹ For G. M. Bryan, on the other hand, the Kingdom of God concept is a more distinctively theological matter. Bryan feels that Toynbee solves the problem of how the Kingdom could be *in* this world yet not *of* it by a link, who is Christ, and a "spiritual reorientation" which lifts This World into The Next. Thus he is distinguished from Sorokin and the Social Gospellers who envision the achievement of the Kingdom here.³²

One topic remains to be seen: Toynbee's attitude toward Western Civilization. The critics are frequently disturbed by Toynbee's attitude toward Western Civilization, either by his judgment on its intrinsic worth or on its fate, or both (as Geyl and Jerrold.) Granville Hicks is both with him and against him. His attitude is that we need not accept Toynbee's conclusions and abandon hope for Western Civilization because the conclusions are not fool-proof, yet his work should provide us with valuable prospective, since it is neither pessimistic nor sanguinely optimistic.³³ Blyth, after pointing out the insufficiencies of the "categories of interpretation" concludes that we shall not need to

³¹ J. H. Nichols, "Religion in Toynbee's History," *Journal of Religion*, XXVIII (April, 1948), 99-119. Edna Beyer, "History as 'A Way of Salvation,'" *Columbia*, XXVIII (September, 1948), 6, 21, criticizes Toynbee's indefiniteness and ambiguity in his proposed religious salvation. K. M. Booth, "Prisoners of Time," *The Month*, XI (February, 1954), 84-93, is a commentary on Toynbee's characterization of historians as "prisoners of time" when specialization leads them to accumulate meaningless data to prove meaningless hypotheses. Booth finds that neither Toynbee nor history can escape the prison of time without Christ to free us, in whom lies the real meaning of history.

³² G. McLeod Bryan, "'Kingdom of God' Concept in Sorokin and Toynbee," *Social Forces*, XXVI (March, 1948), 288-92. Before leaving this topic two articles, neither of great portent, might be noted for their analysis of Toynbee as a Faustian interpretation of history. The articles are: Abram Kardiner, "Arnold Toynbee's Civilization on Trial: Analysis," *Scientific American*, CLXXXIX (August, 1948), 58-9; M. Whitcomb Hess, "Two Historians: Ozanam and Toynbee," *America*, LXXVIII (January 24, 1948), 465-6.

³³ Hicks, *op. cit.*, 123.

await "doom" or a "divine miracle."³⁴ With both men, then, Toynbee's logical deficiencies are the hope of Western Civilization. Frank Underhill considers Toynbee's "root weakness" as an historian speaking to the modern world his insufficient interest in our modern civilization. This leads him to an inadequate analysis of our strength and weaknesses.³⁵ G. F. Hudson in two articles (one with an unsuspecting title) expresses Geyl's accusation that Toynbee has abandoned the West and is guilty of defeatism.³⁶ In total contrast to these there is another article in which the author finds that the real issue today is a conflict between rival philosophies of history—ultimately the Marxian and the Christian. Toynbee, bearing the mantle of Augustine, becomes then the defender of the West.³⁷

After reading the numerous critics one is tempted to conclude as someone has already:

. . . if one is in broad sympathy with what he is trying to do, his errors, however numerous appear as blemishes in a picture rather than as wrong turns in a chain of reasoning. But if one is not in sympathy with him, everything seems equally pointless, and the whole pattern dissolves in chaos.³⁸

This does not, however, perfectly express this author's attitude. Criticism such as that aimed at Toynbee can be the expression of a healthy and constructive skepticism based on reverence for the truth. If it is such, and well it may be, then it is indicative of the value of scholarly criticism.

³⁴ Blyth, *op. cit.*, 370.

³⁵ Underhill, *op. cit.*, 215.

³⁶ G. F. Hudson, "Professor Toynbee Surrenders the West," *Commentary*, XV (May, 1953), 469-74; "Toynbee vs. Gibbon," *Twentieth Century*, CLVI (November, 1954), 403-12.

³⁷ R. Lloyd, "Christian Opinion In England Today," *Quarterly Review*, CCLXXIV (April, 1940), 293-306. This is supposed to be a review of vols. L-VI; it is instead what the title suggests. G. G. Higgins in "Catholic Tests of a Social Order," *Catholic Mind*, XXXXVI (September, 1948), 565-6, finds Toynbee socially constructive in his opposition to extreme economic individualism. In reference to this topic of Toynbee's attitude toward Western Civilization it is well to mention that not a great deal of attention is devoted to Toynbee's concept of progress, only one article choosing that as its topic, and then it handles several ideas of progress. The article is: Thomas Wendell, "Some Recent Ideas of Progress," *Personalist*, XXIX (April, 1948), 128-36.

³⁸ N. Frye, "Toynbee and Spengler," *Canadian Forum*, XXVII (August, 1947), 111-13. This article is a short comparison of the two, concluding that there is much Spengler in Toynbee.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

A History of the Crusades. Volume III. The Kingdom of Acre and the Later Crusades, by Stephen Runciman. New York. Cambridge University Press. 1954. pp. xii, 530. \$6.50.

The third and final volume of Runciman's enthusiastically received *History of the Crusades* begins with the Christian counter-offensive following Saladin's conquest of the Kingdom of Jerusalem (1187). It maintains a parallel account of the Kingdoms of Acre, Cyprus, and Armenia, together with the Principality of Antioch and County of Tripoli, as well as selections from the history of surrounding states, such as those of the Egyptian Sultans and the Mongol Khans. It recounts the Third Crusade, whose dominant figure was Richard the Lionhearted, the errant Fourth Crusade, which took Constantinople, the Fifth Crusade, misled by Pelagius, the Crusade of the excommunicated Frederick II, the futile Crusades of Saint Louis IX of France, and various minor Crusades, such as those of Theobald of Champagne, the *Infantes* of Aragon, and Edward of England. It discusses the rise and impact of the Mongols and Mameluks. And it concludes inserts on the commerce, architecture, and art of Outremer. The consecutive story really comes to an end with the fall of Acre in 1291. But Runciman adds an epilogue on Later Crusades, notably those against the Moslems, which ended in defeat at Nicopolis (1396) and Varna (1444). And the work concludes with a brief, rather derogatory evaluation of the Crusades as a whole.

Runciman's present volume brings to completion his *opus magnum*. His approach is essentially chronological, and, with rare exceptions, his style is one of simple narration. Despite passing gestures, he does not present the institutional history of Outremer. Although he is an excellent storyteller, his work is weak in analysis and generalization. Perhaps he has left this task to the five-volume cooperative *History of the Crusades*, in the process of being written under the editorship of Kenneth Setton. Together, these two works, totalling eight volumes, should provide us with an excellent coverage of a dramatic movement, which, in its proportions and duration, is unique in human history.

In employing the simple narrative approach, Runciman is probably influenced by the primary sources, which he uses copiously. His style also displays a similar vigour, touch of detail, and eminent readability. But, in the present reviewer's opinion, the virtues of the work decline somewhat in each successive volume. One reason, no doubt, is the subject-matter itself. For, as the story progresses, the latter becomes more complex, and the writer is compelled, more and more, to lean on secondary sources. Even, in some cases, he seems to have completely digested neither the primary nor the secondary sources, as in his account of the Children's Crusade of 1212 (pp. 139-144). In this latter, although he quotes the scholarly investigation of the subject by Dana C. Munro, based on a careful study of the primary sources, he follows earlier, less critical elaborations, without any explanation for his procedure, or even the suggestion that there is a radical difference between his references. And Runciman's final evaluation of the

Crusades is too pessimistic and one-sided, which is partly due to the fact that he considers their effects almost exclusively from the long-term point of view, and primarily in the light of their asserted detrimental effect on the fate of Eastern Christians. If we are to believe Runciman's final chapter, the Crusades were entirely a harmful mistake, and without qualification a vast "fiasco". Yet this, it seems, is going too far, even for a "Byzantophile." Runciman's grand accomplishment in his three-volume *History of the Crusades* should not be allowed to dazzle us, as it is open to serious question on certain points. But, at the same time, it is a real contribution and a classic in its field, which should be purchased by every university and municipal library of size.

Daniel D. McGarry, Saint Louis University.

Academic Freedom in Our Time, by Robert M. MacIver. New York. Columbia University Press, 1955. pp. xiv, 329. \$4.00.

Academic freedom in some circles is a battle cry, in others a disreputable term. One meaning of this phrase can well be expressed in the words of Cardinal Newman, "Knowledge is its own end," as the author says in his introduction (though without making any distinctions). This book should be in many ways a possible meeting ground, for it is a serious discussion of all phases of academic freedom, written with that judicious breadth of view that has characterized Professor MacIver's scholarly works in the field of sociology.

The book is divided into five parts. In the first, the author studies the climate of opinion. He finds that in the United States this climate is influenced by three factors: the ground of agreement, the alignment of differences, and the structure of communication. He notes that to a greater or lesser extent, anti-intellectualism has always been a factor in American opinion (fostering pragmatism and instrumentalism), and so has group competitiveness. Insecurity—personal, group-level, national—tends to bring on an emotional appeal for that which is deemed to be threatened. Hence, socialism, government interference in business, world communism have in various ways stirred up attacks on academic freedom.

In the second part, the author studies the structure of the American college and university, the role of the board, the president, the faculty, the alumni, and (for the state-controlled institutions) the political controls. American universities are not and could not be run as a "senate of the faculty." But the distinction between the faculty and the governing powers makes interference possible, and when distinction is joined with lack of communication, makes it likely. Professor MacIver believes that this is the major source of complaints, and that it is also the most easily adjusted, if communication, cooperation, faculty participation, and so on, are brought about.

In the third part, the author examines the various kinds of interference with academic freedom and their grounds. He classifies them as the economic line of attack, the religious, and the line of social tradition. He devotes a lengthy consideration to the problem of the communist party member on the faculty, and to the various, usually inept, means taken to remove him.

In the fourth part, the author considers especially the teaching function, the relation of teacher to student, and the student's freedom. Here, more than in the other parts, the consideration is restricted to the college and university level. As the author says repeatedly, the problem at the secondary and elementary school level is quite different.

In the last part, the author considers in a broad way the function of a university in the advancement of civilization. There are also two appendices, a short statement about academic freedom in a denominational university, and an account of the self-investigation at the University of Colorado. There are a select bibliography and an index.

By and large, the author takes an inclusive view, and exercises a balanced judgment. For example, he insists on the obligations of a teacher as much as on his rights. But this reviewer thinks that there are particular points that could and should be argued.

Professor MacIver has a good understanding of the nature of science; he not only rejects superficial positivism and semanticism, but clearly sees the constructural character of scientific theory. He insists, also, that the humanities are different from science, and are valid and necessary kinds of knowledge. But it does not seem clear that he has an adequate understanding of that kind of knowledge; he offers no visible ground for the distinction he makes. Perhaps that is why he has his troubles with philosophy.

In his study of communism in relation to academic freedom—an excellent and balanced one—he does not seem to recognize the fact that the dedicated communist does not teach but propagandizes. He does not aim to impart knowledge but to persuade to a course of action. Admittedly, there is no reason in the world why Americans should not know about communism, and there would be no reason for their not learning about it from a communist—except that the communist would not teach but would persuade. This same distinction can explain why many persons reasonably object to the “teaching” of certain philosophical and moral views—it is not teaching but persuasion. This is not to say that the teacher deliberately intends to persuade to a course of action, but that under concrete circumstances often because of his apparently neutral position as a teacher he persuades rather than teaches. This distinction is difficult to apply in practice, yet it seems to be of vital importance.

Another point might well be made. The author does not go to the extremes of the American Library Association and some publishers in raising the cry of “freedom of thought” over every censorship case; he realizes that some times what is at stake ought not to be dignified by the term, “thought.” The author maintains that in a denominational university there cannot be complete freedom of thought. He admits that there are differences between various denominational schools, but that all deny freedom of research and teaching to a greater or lesser extent. What is actually involved in a prior commitment to a dogmatic faith? Is it a denial of factual evidence or of a right to investigate, or is it a denial of the legitimacy of some hypothesis or theory? For purposes of illustration, consider the case of methodical anti-supernaturalism (and, a fortiori, dogmatic anti-supernaturalism); it will not allow a scientist even to investigate the facts of the miraculous cures at Lourdes. This reviewer

knows of no restriction of this kind that is a consequence of accepting the Catholic faith, and, being of an empiricist bent, considers it more scientific to be open to admit all evidences including some that exclude certain theories, than to be open to all theories and thereby exclude some facts from consideration. Of course, at the root of this disagreement is a disagreement as to the kind and limits of the truth attainable to the human mind.

Finally, the very thoroughness of the present book raises a question: Can there be a complete and adequate theory of academic freedom? For it seems to the reviewer that academic freedom is a problem in the practical order. Now, it is impossible so to frame a human law that it will adequately cover all possible contingencies—a human judge will always be needed to apply the law. Justice is concretely safeguarded by the law together with reasonable procedures—the “due process” notion. Similarly, it seems to be possible to state the general principles of personal and group freedom. These are also the principles of academic freedom. To safeguard the freedom of the individual in the concrete order, it would seem necessary and sufficient to establish formally and ahead of time a reasonable procedure to deal with actual or alleged infringements of these principles.

George P. Klubertanz, Saint Louis University.

Federalist Delaware, 1775-1815, by John A. Munroe. New Brunswick. Rutgers U. Press, 1955. pp. xiv, 286. \$5.00.

Nearly ten years ago Mr. Munroe submitted a doctoral dissertation entitled *Delaware in the Revolutionary Era, 1775-1815* as proof of his scholarly abilities. That research project now emerges as *Federalist Delaware, 1775-1815*. The published book still contains many of the characteristics of an exceptional doctoral dissertation. The research is exhaustive and based principally upon primary sources. Appropriate quotations from those contemporary materials are woven skillfully into the text. Numerous footnotes (averaging four per printed page) impress the reader. The literary style is heavy and only devoted Delawareans will find the book interesting and alive.

The publisher claims that *Federalist Delaware, 1775-1815* is “the only reliable account of this period of the state’s history.” The reviewer concurs. Professor Munroe’s solid history will be used by students of Delaware history and by scholars interested in the 1775-1815 era of American history for more than half a century. This book is an excellent contribution to historians’ history—it will hardly appeal to those cultists who want history sugar-coated and popularized.

Federalist Delaware is divided into three parts. Part One, which takes up two-fifths of the book, deals with Delaware developments in the Revolutionary War years. Part Two treats the state’s history in the so-called “Critical Era” while Part Three carries the story of the three counties from 1789 to 1815. The treatment, basically, is topical but with emphasis upon political developments. Mr. Munroe believes that politics gives the 1775-1815 period of Delaware history “its peculiar importance.” The best sections of the book are those which treat the growth of Delaware’s milling industry, the emergence of Methodism as a social and political force, the decline of slavery in a border state, the growth of self-government and the persistence of Federalism in 1800-1815. Although Professor Munroe generally recites

what happened rather than analyzes why it happened, he occasionally makes sorties on the sea of interpretation. In a summary section he explains Delaware's devotion to the conservative tradition: "In the process of developing from a colony to a state, the three counties on the Delaware had changed very little. Their patterns for the most part had already been set. Their bounds had been filled out; the lands largely taken up. The limited area hardly permitted any physical or encouraged any philosophical expansion. The lack of western lands, of great undeveloped natural resources, and of good harbors opening a vista of a world beyond, discouraged the people from entertaining any very positive belief in a theory of progress and from considering the changes and undertaking the reforms necessary to the introduction of a new order."

Although *Federalist Delaware* is a worthy work, the cultural arts receive a cursory treatment. The causes of the Revolution are treated superficially—Mr. Munroe advances the thesis that Delaware fought because of "her close association with her neighbors" and that Pennsylvania merely wagged her Delaware tail. Not a single illustration is included in the entire book.

A seven-page bibliography attests to the author's industry. The index includes subject entries as well as proper nouns. The publisher recognizes that this book belongs in the historians' history category by putting the footnotes in their proper place instead of relegating them to an appendix or eliminating them entirely to reduce printing costs.

Frank L. Klement, Marquette University.

The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass: Volume IV, Reconstruction and After, edited with biographical introduction by Philip S. Foner. New York. International Publishers. 1955. pp. 574. \$5.00.

This is the final book in *The Life and Writings of Frederick Douglass*: Volumes I and II appeared in 1950, Volume III in 1952. The present work follows the pattern of its predecessors. First there is a critical and detailed biographical treatment of Douglass, consisting of one hundred and forty-one pages, for the period covered by his writings and speeches in this concluding book. The standard of Dr. Foner's biographical performance is above that of Benjamin Quarles, the only other modern study of Douglass, published in 1948. This is followed by the collected works of Douglass after the Civil War. Next are the reference notes to the biography and the Douglass productions. These adequate and unusually helpful notes properly belong at the page bottoms where they would be available at a glance. The author-editor concludes with a thirteen-page chronology, a model of its kind, covering the entire life of Douglass. The index of the present volume (each has a separate index) is not completely analytical and has the earmarks of a hack effort. The print of the book is readable and the binding, although not distinctive, is sturdy.

The story of Douglass, the noted Negro abolitionist, orator and journalist, reaches a heroic climax in this volume. Here Douglass is at his best as the leader, the symbol and the voice of a vast oppressed section of the American people. When the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments became dead letters in the wake of political Reconstruction in the South, he took up the cudgel anew in behalf of the Negro. He had no patience with the idea of gradualism and insisted rather on immediate full equality. He was firmly

convinced that the struggle for the achievement of complete rights for the Negro in the United States must be both consistent and persistent.

There were, however, certain shortcomings in the leadership provided by Douglass in the sunset of his life. He did not push for economic guarantees of Negro freedom; he did not properly identify his cause with the developing labor movement; he did little to crystalize opposition to the betrayal of the Negro by the Republican Party. All this does not minimize the fact that when some Negro leaders, like the well-known Booker T. Washington, were promoting compromise and conciliation, Douglass unyieldingly opposed segregation in all forms. If alive today he would be the unquestioned leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The leadership of Douglass in the cause of the Negro following the Civil War is all the more phenomenal considering that he held public positions of only minor importance during these years. He was successively secretary of the Santo Domingo Commission, marshal and recorder of deeds of the District of Columbia and finally United States minister to Haiti. But the forte of Douglass was the lecture platform and the press. Public position always frustrated and sometimes stifled his talent and zeal to agitate.

LeRoy H. Fischer, Oklahoma A. & M. College.

Brokenburn, The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868. Edited by John Q. Anderson. Baton Rouge. Louisiana State University Press. 1955. pp. xxii, 400. \$4.95.

The Civil War period has, in recent years, been covered from the viewpoint of military leaders of various high ranks. In addition, and perhaps with an eye for sales to ex-G. I.'s, some such accounts have been published about warriors with scarcely any rank at all. Other accounts have revolved about war-time journalists and similar important quasi-official personages. It seems rather refreshing, then, to have a Civil War treatment centering about a civilian figure, most of all an intelligent and perceptive Southern belle, Kate Stone.

The fact that this volume is a diary with an adequate but not excessive amount of editing enhances the value of the work. By happy coincidence the journal begins in May, 1861—virtually at the outset of the war—and continues until Reconstruction days. It gives a highly interesting first-hand picture of life on a large Louisiana plantation (Brokenburn) during the war years and includes the recounting of the dramatic flight of Kate Stone and her family to Texas and their post-war return to the devastated plantation.

In finding this diary, Professor Anderson has presented a considerable amount of very readable material for the student of the Civil War Southland.

Clifford J. Reutter, University of Detroit.

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